Middle helladic and early Mycenaean mortuary customs in the southern and western Peloponnese

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Volume I

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DECLARATION BY AUTHOR

I declare that

- I have composed this thesis, and
- the work is my own

Signed: Michael John Boyd

Date: 28 March 1999 (28.3.99)

For my mother and my father

ABSTRACT

Middle helladic and early Mycenaean burial customs in the southern and western Peloponnese.

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The aim of this thesis is to set out the evidence for burial practices in the southern and western Peloponnese of Greece during the middle helladic and early Mycenaean periods (*circa* 2050/2000BC to 1445/1415BC), and to interpret the evidence in terms of human action.

The first half of the thesis sets out the scope of the research. *Chapter One* is a basic introduction to the material, including the chronological boundaries, a basic description of the material, problems of dating sites, the topography of the region, and a summary of survey results in the area. In *Chapter Two* some approaches to mortuary data are examined, in particular notions that architecture can be classified in a meaningful way in relation to the past and that funerary ceremonies in some way reflect the lifetime status of the recently dead, as well as ideas about the relationships between mortuary architecture, funerary practices and society. It is suggested that burial practices are often seen to be bound up in the reproduction of pan-helladic social structures in the form of the 'Mycenaean civilisation', and it is suggested that in the early Mycenaean period burial practices are seen to constitute one of only two principal signifiers of that civilisation (the other being Mycenaean pottery).

Chapter Three sets forth an outline theory of human action with special reference to the mortuary arena. Action is examined through its medium, the human body, and in its setting, the locale. The idea of locale is developed in order to understand how people perceive their environment and interpret space through routine occupancy and movement, and through the propagation of knowledge. Aspects of locale impacting on human action include its place in the landscape, architecture, material culture and tradition. The human body as medium of action is considered in how it may interact with its environment and with others. *Chapter Four* includes a review of the epistemological approaches of past excavators to their material, and the effect of this on the nature and content of published reports. The second part of this chapter examines

the question of how to investigate human action in the mortuary locale on the basis of the available evidence. An analytical methodology is presented that allows for examination of the evidence in terms of four main areas of human activity: grave location, grave construction, pre-mortuary rites, and rites in the tomb.

The second half of the thesis presents an analysis of the evidence in order to answer the following generic questions: where were tombs situated, how were they occupied and what was their place in the encultured landscape; what was the meaning and effect of architecture; what did people do in tombs and as part of mortuary rites; how were practices and structures maintained and altered through time, and what brought about their widespread reproduction? The evidence on which the analysis is based is presented in *Appendix One*, which contains detailed descriptions and illustrations of 61 sites in the study area. The place of the grave in the landscape is examined in *Chapter Five*; mortuary architecture is analysed in *Chapter Six*; evidence for preparatory acts before funerals is reviewed in *Chapter Seven*; and mortuary practices are considered in *Chapter Eight*. *Chapter Nine* presents the general conclusions of the study, including both a summary of burial practices as evidenced, and a historical framework within which those practices may be set. Areas of continuity and change in tradition are identified and explained. The chapter considers the implications of these conclusions on the use of burial practices in the study of 'Mycenaean civilisation', confirming that variations in time and space suggest closer study of local and regional archaeologies should be a priority in future research aims.

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Μεσοελλαδικά και πρώιμα Μυκηναϊκά ταφικά έθιμα στη νότια και δυτική Πελοπόννησο.

Michael John Boyd

Διδακτορική διατριβή: Πανεπιστήμιο του Edinburgh 1999.

Η παρούσα διατριβή στοχεύει να παρουσιάσει τις υπάρχουσες μαρτυρίες για ταφικές πρακτικές στη νότια και δυτική Πελοπόννησο, κατά τη μεσοελλαδική και πρώιμη Μυκηναϊκή περίοδο (περίπου 2050/2000 ως 1445/1415 π.Χ.), και να προβεί σε ερμηνεία τους σε επίπεδο ανθρώπινης πράξης.

Στο πρώτο μέρος της εργασίας ορίζεται το «πεδίο δράσης» της έρευνας. Το *Πρώτο Κεφάλαιο* αποτελεί μια βασική εισαγωγή στο υπό μελέτη υλικό. Εξετάζονται τα χρονολογικά πλαίσια της μελέτης, παρουσιάζεται σύντομα το υπό μελέτη υλικό, περιγράφονται προβλήματα στη χρονολόγηση θέσεων, σκιαγραφείται η τοπογραφία της περιοχής, και, τέλος, παρουσιάζονται συνοπτικά τα αποτελέσματα των επιφανειακών ερευνών στην περιοχή. Στο *Δεύτερο Κεφάλαιο* εξετάζονται κάποιες προσεγγίσεις που αφορούν τη μελέτη των ταφικών δεδομένων, πιο συγκεκριμένα απόψεις, όπως αυτή που θέλει την ταξινόμηση της αρχιτεκτονικής να αποκτά νόημα όταν γίνεται σε σχέση με το παρελθόν, ή την αντίληψη ότι οι ταφικές τελετουργίες αντανακλούν, με κάποιο τρόπο, το κύρος του νεκρού στη διάρκεια της ζωής του, όπως επίσης και απόψεις που αφορούν τις σχέσεις ανάμεσα στην ταφική αρχιτεκτονική, τις ταφικές πρακτικές και την κοινωνία. Υποστηρίζεται ότι οι ταφικές πρακτικές φαίνονται συχνά να συνδέονται με την αναπαραγωγή παν-ελλαδικών κοινωνικών δομών με τη μορφή του "Μυκηναϊκού πολιτισμού", και, κατά την πρώιμη Μυκηναϊκή περίοδο, να συνιστούν ένα από τα δύο βασικά "σήματα κατατεθέντα" αυτού του πολιτισμού. Το *Τρίτο Κεφάλαιο* εκθέτει τα κύρια σημεία μιας θεωρίας της ανθρώπινης πράξης, με ειδική αναφορά στον τομέα του θανάτου. Η πράξη εξετάζεται δια του μέσου της, του ανθρώπινου σώματος, και του σκηνικού της, του locale. Αναπτύσσεται η ιδέα του locale για να γίνει κατανοητός ο τρόπος με τον οποίο οι άνθρωποι αντιλαμβάνονται το περιβάλλον τους και ερμηνεύουν το χώρο, μέσα από την

καθημερινή διαβίωση και την κίνησή τους μέσα σε αυτόν αλλά και τη μετάδοση της γνώσης. Διαστάσεις του locale που επιδρούν στην ανθρώπινη πράξη σχετίζονται με τη θέση του μέσα στο τοπίο, την αρχιτεκτονική, τον υλικό πολιτισμό και την παράδοση. Αναζητείται ο τρόπος με τον οποίο το ανθρώπινο σώμα σαν μέσο πράξης αντιδρά με το περιβάλλον και τους άλλους παράγοντες. Το *Τέταρτο Κεφάλαιο* περιλαμβάνει μια ανασκόπηση των επιστημολογικών προσεγγίσεων που χαρακτήριζαν ανασκαφείς στο παρελθόν και τις συνέπειες αυτών για το χαρακτήρα και το περιεχόμενο των δημοσιεύσεων. Στο δεύτερο μέρος αυτού του κεφαλαίου εξετάζεται το πρόβλημα του τρόπου διερεύνησης της ανθρώπινης πράξης, όσον αφορά το locale του θανάτου, με βάση τα διαθέσιμα στοιχεία. Παρουσιάζεται μια αναλυτική μεθοδολογία που επιτρέπει την εξέταση των δεδομένων αναφορικά με τέσσερις τομείς ανθρώπινης δράσης: τοποθεσία του τάφου, κατασκευή του τάφου, τελετές πριν από την ταφή, και τελετές στον τάφο.

Στο δεύτερο μέρος της διατριβής παρουσιάζεται η ανάλυση των δεδομένων με στόχο να απαντηθούν τα ακόλουθα βασικά ερωτήματα: που βρίσκονται οι τάφοι; πως "χρησιμοποιούνται" και ποιά είναι η θέση τους στο "εκπολιτισμένο" τοπίο; ποιά ήταν η σημασία αλλά και οι επιπτώσεις της αρχιτεκτονικής; τί έπρατταν οι άνθρωποι στους τάφους και στα πλαίσια των ταφικών τελετών; με ποιό τρόπο συντηρούνταν και μεταβάλλονταν στο χρόνο πρακτικές και δομές και τί οδήγησε στην ευρεία αναπαραγωγή τους; Τα δεδομένα στα οποία στηρίζεται η ανάλυση παρουσιάζονται στην Προσθήκη 1, που περιέχει λεπτομερείς περιγραφές και απεικονίσεις των 61 θέσεων στην υπό μελέτη περιοχή. Στο *Πέμπτο Κεφάλαιο* εξετάζεται η θέση του τάφου στο τοπίο, στο *Εκτο Κεφάλαιο* αναλύεται η ταφική αρχιτεκτονική, στο *Εβδομο Κεφάλαιο* γίνεται ανασκόπηση των προπαρασκευαστικών πράξεων πριν από τις κηδείες, ενώ οι ταφικές πρακτικές συζητιούνται στο *Ογδοο Κεφάλαιο*. Το *Ενατο Κεφάλαιο* παρουσιάζει τα γενικά συμπεράσματα της μελέτης, περιλαμβάνοντας μια σύνοψη των ταφικών πρακτικών όπως καταγράφονται, αλλά και τα ιστορικά πλαίσια μέσα στα οποία αυτές θα μπορούσαν να τοποθετηθούν. Αναγνωρίζονται και ερμηνεύονται τομείς συνέχειας αλλά και αλλαγών στην παράδοση. Το κεφάλαιο αυτό συζητά τη σημασία των παραπάνω συμπερασμάτων για τη χρήση των ταφικών πρακτικών στη μελέτη του "Μυκηναϊκού πολιτισμού", κάνοντας σαφές πως διαφοροποιήσεις στο χρόνο και στο χώρο καθιστούν απαραίτητη προτεραιότητα για τη μελλοντική έρευνα τη βαθύτερη μελέτη του αρχαιολογικού υλικού τόσο σε επίπεδο τοπικό όσο και σε επίπεδο περιοχής.

The text on this and the preceding page is a translation of the abstract on pages 4 & 5 into modern Greek. Translation: E. Kiriatzi.

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My parents allowed me to choose my own path and have enthusiastically encouraged me to follow it. I owe everything I am to them, and proudly dedicate this thesis to them.

Note on transliteration

With the exception of very few placenames with well-established transliterations (for example *Mycenae, Athens*), all sites in this thesis are referred to by transliterations made according to the scheme set out here. The guiding principle is that the transliteration should form the closest approximation possible of the Greek pronunciation for the English speaker.

The acute accent is used to denote the position of the vowel accentuated when the placename is pronounced in its nominative form. This is the equivalent of the *tónos* in current Greek spelling. Examples are

Πύλος	Pílos
Βαφειό	Vafió

Where the *tónos* lies on a capitalised first vowel, it is omitted in transliteration.

The diaeresis is used exactly as in modern Greek spelling, and indicates two succeeding vowels forming a diphthong:

Βοϊδοκοιλιά	Voïdhokiliá

Greek vowels and vowel combinations are transliterated as follows:

ι, ει, η, οι, υι, υ	i
α	a
ε, αι	e
ο, ω	o
ου	ou

The following vowel combinations are transliterated as vowel-consonant combinations:

αυ, ευ, ηυ	av, ev, iv or af, ef, if (depending on pronunciation)

Greek consonants and consonant combinations are transliterated as follows:

Consonant	Transliteration	Consonant	Transliteration
β	v	π	p
γ	g or y (depending on pronunciation)	ρ	r
δ	dh (pronounced as *th* in *them*)	σ	s
ζ	z	τ	t
θ	th (pronounced as *th* in *thin*)	φ	f
κ	k	χ	h
λ	l	ψ	ps
μ	m	γγ, γκ	ng
ν	n	μπ	b
ξ	x	ντ	d

Greek personal names are transliterated according to the same system. However, where a book or article has been published in English by a Greek author, the author's name is transcribed in accordance with the system in operation in the publication.

Chapter One

Introduction to the chronology, landscape and material under study

The scope of the thesis

This thesis aims to examine the evidence for mortuary practices in the southern and western Peloponnese (within the modern boundaries of Messinía, Ilía and Lakonía) in the periods MHI-LHIIB (*circa* 2050/2000BC to 1445/1415BC - table 1.1). By studying grave, tomb and cemetery location, grave and tomb architecture, and the evidence for mortuary practice preserved in archaeological remains, it is hoped to approach a complete understanding of *what people did* in relation to the most difficult circumstance of life: death. Through a detailed site catalogue (appendix one) and a close examination of the evidence for different areas of practice (location of tomb, cemetery and grave, tomb construction and modification, preparation, and acts at the graveside - chapters five to eight), a wide variety of practices and a series of themes running through the evidence of all periods are identified and set in a historical narrative (chapter nine).

Chronological introduction to the study

Chronologically, this study focuses on funerary sites that were built or used in the middle helladic, late helladic I or late helladic II phases. Conventionally, this represents the period from about 2070BC to 1390BC (Warren & Hankey 1989, 169 table 3.1) or 2050/2000BC to 1445/1415BC (Rutter: 1993, 756 table 2, based on Manning: 1995, revising Warren & Hankey 1989, 169 table 3.1), so a period of at least 550 years and at most 700 years:

Phase	Calendar date BC	
MHI	2050/2000	- 1950/1900
MHII	1950/1900	- 1750/1720
MHIII	1750/1720	- 1680
LHI	1680	- 1600/1580
LHIIA	1600/1580	- 1520/1480
LHIIB	1520/1480	- 1445/1415

Table 1.1. Source: Rutter 1993, 756 table 2; after Manning 1995.

As is clear from table 1.1, I am accepting the current preliminary consensus of opinion that the eruption of the Thíra volcano took place in the summer of 1628BC (proposed principally by Baillie, for example Baillie 1995, chapter 7; accepted by Rutter: 1993; more recent report on the current state of scholarship by Shelmerdine: 1997, especially notes 7 & 8). This revision of the chronology upward, in combination with a more widespread acceptance of a threefold division of middle helladic ceramics (Rutter 1993), allows for the observation that the crucial MHIII phase is short (some 40 to 70 years) in comparison to the preceding MHII phase (200 years); much of the evidence with which this thesis is concerned can be seen to relate to the MHIII and LHI phases.

The selection of these chronological phases is easy to explain. The aim is to investigate, through funerary evidence, the period before the Mycenaean palatial phase (which in broad terms and for these purposes is regarded as LHIIIA-B; Shelmerdine 1997), both to understand the archaeology of that period, and to examine the coming into being of 'Mycenaean civilisation' (chapters two & nine). With particular regard to funerary evidence, the first monumental burial places seem to date from early in the middle helladic period (*17:Voïdhokiliá* in particular is well dated to MHI), and moreover seem to be part of a pattern of middle helladic monumental burial places that overlap with the tholos tombs of the late helladic period (as recognised by the *University of Minnesota Messenia Expedition*: McDonald & Hope Simpson 1961, 256-257; 1969, 172-173). In very broad terms, therefore, the chosen chronological range allows for both the study of burial evidence regarded as early Mycenaean, and for potentially related but earlier evidence.

Pottery style and chronology

The primary chronological indicator for almost all sites included in this study is pottery style (one site, *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia*, has a single radiocarbon determination, although this is not the primary dating indicator for the site; the inclusion of *60:Sikéa* is based on the dating of a sword earlier than the pottery content of the tomb; *31:Dhára* is also not directly dated by its pottery).

A great many sites are chronologically complex, having been the focus for repeated intrusion, interference, cleaning out and deposition over sometimes quite long periods, often extending beyond the period being investigated here. Carefully excavated sites reveal much of the evidence for this in their stratigraphy; at other sites, only the juxtaposition in the finds' tray of pottery of earlier and later periods bears witness to a lengthy period or periods of use.

Some pottery is an extremely close indicator of chronology, and the presence of certain styles offers a more precise dating than could be achieved with any other method. Other pottery styles are exceptionally long lived, and offer no more than a broad indication. The interpretation of chronology on the basis of pottery style is not therefore a matter of simple, empirical observation.

The analysis to be presented in later chapters is not driven by strict chronological transitional points: the practices observed, described and interpreted in later chapters are unrelated to the accepted pottery-style chronological boundaries, such as MHIII to LHI or LHI to LHIIA. The chronological bands chosen for the examination of material in later chapters (MHI-II, MHIII-LHI, LHI-LHIIA, LHIIB) tends to straddle boundaries rather than respect them. The reasons for examining the evidence in these bands are given in the sections below, along with a discussion of the initial boundary of the period of study, and which monuments fall within it.

EHIII and the transition to middle helladic

The middle helladic I & II phases cover a period of up to about 300 years, from 2050BC or 2000BC to 1750BC or 1720BC (table 1.1 above), MHI covering the first 100 years, MHII the following 200 years or so. The unusual pottery sequence in Messinía and Lakonía between EHII and MHI has been described by Rutter (1993, 773; 1979, 15): virtually no EHIII pottery is known from these areas, either in survey or excavation. Rutter has proposed that EHII ceramic styles continued to be made and used long after the end of the EHII chronological phase, and

that EHIII styles were never properly or widely adopted in these regions; instead, EHII styles continued to be used until the beginning of the middle helladic period. These suggestions were made in the context of what Rutter saw as the perhaps highly regionalised nature of ceramic styles in the early and middle bronze age. He has argued that the ceramic assemblage known as EHIII and most clearly represented at Lérna should be seen as a fusion between, or development of, the EHII (Lérna III) style and the Lefkandí I assemblage; a fusion suggested to have taken place in central Greece and then adopted in places like Lérna. The processes of this adoption, whether violent or not, seem not to have affected the southern Peloponnese.

If this is accepted, and also in the light of comments above about the nature of the MHIII/LHI division, it is clear that ceramic styles need not change sharply nor need they change in all places at the same time[1].

Dickinson (1982, 133) argued against any absence of an EHIII ceramic phase in Messinía and Lakonía, calling this proposition 'a counsel of despair'. He partly backs this up by pointing to the traditional theory of widespread destructions throughout the helladic area at the end of EHII (as stated most clearly by Caskey: 1960), which is however no longer regarded as tenable (Forsén 1992). He also points to the other changes that occur between EHII and MHI, notably domestic architecture and 'ordinary domestic pottery'. As far as architecture is concerned, Forsén's catalogue lists seven sites in Messinía and four in Lakonía, of which four include excavated EH architecture (Forsén 1992, 98-107). At Pílos, Forsén dates two possible apsidal buildings to EHII, at Voïdhokiliá the nature of the architecture is unclear, at Akovítika there are two 'corridor house'-type buildings, and at Koufóvouno an apsidal house is dated EHII. The presence of apsidal houses in EHII contexts may undermine Dickinson's argument for an architectural change, since apsidal houses are generally taken as indicative of the EHIII/MH period.

A lack of EHIII pottery in Messinía and Lakonía therefore remains an apparently real phenomenon, although one which is being given more careful study in recent work. In the final publication of pottery from the *Laconia Survey*, Cavanagh & Crouwel (1996, 16) state that the 'wider problem' of the 'absence of EHIII ceramics ... has not been changed by the Laconia Survey'. However, the preliminary report of the *Pylos Regional Archaeological Project* (Davis *et alii* 1997, 419) notes the possible presence of EHIII ceramics at three sites: Pílos, Ordhines and Beïlérbeï. Moreover the publication of the excavations at *30:Nihória* has produced an MHI

[1] 'Ceramic regionalism during this period is pronounced, far more so than in the preceding EHII period although not necessarily more so than in the succeeding MH period': Rutter 1995, 648.

assemblage that has clear links with EHIII material (Howell: 1992; Dickinson 1992, 110; Rutter: 1993, 773). So Rutter's hypothesis, that the southern Peloponnese was largely isolated from ceramic changes that anyway occurred gradually elsewhere, seems now rather more plausible than any suggestion of an abandonment of the southern Peloponnese in EHIII, or that settlement was nucleated in areas that survey has not reached (Dickinson 1982, 133).

The situation in Ilía is somewhat different. The trenches excavated in advance of the construction of the new museum at Olímbia revealed remains of the EHIII and MHI periods, with a little earlier and later material (Koumouzelis 1980, chapter three). This EHIII assemblage is explicitly compared with Lérna IV. Four apsidal houses from the Altis at Olímbia are also dated EHIII by Koumouzelis. However EHIII is not securely present in other excavated Elean contexts (Forsén 1992, 84-94).

If the natures of the ceramic sequence and settlement of the period are unclear, traces of burial are even more obscure. There is no unambiguous burial evidence for the EHIII period within the area under study, and everywhere else such burials are a rare phenomenon. One important question surrounds the dating of certain of the monumental burial constructions regarded as middle helladic in this thesis. Müller (1989), in her catalogue, lists as possibly EHIII *17:Voïdhokiliá* (Müller's site 1) and *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia* (Müller's site 5). At *17:Voïdhokiliá* she cites the presence of 'EHIII' pithoi broken in the dromos of the LHI tholos tomb, which she compares to certain features at Stenó on Lefkádha (Müller 1989, 18); these are however by no means clearly part of the funerary mound. Korrés (1982a, 230) summing up his preliminary conclusions, states that the artefactual evidence from the mound supports a date of construction and use of MHI only[2]. As for *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia*, the presence of an ovoid jar (**A1.*14*.30**[3]) caused Marinátos to suggest an EH/MH date for the construction of the mound (Marinátos 1954, 311-313). Korrés' re-excavation of the mound led him to suggest a date of MHII-III for the mound (Korrés 1980), although MHI material is also present; the ovoid jar was recovered by the villagers from an unknown context and in any case traces of EHII habitation have been found at the site. Forsén (1992, 101), following Caskey (1986, 24), points out that the shape is known in both EHII and MH but is not certainly attested from an EHIII context; hence she excludes an EH date for this mound, as do I.

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[2] '... σχηματισμὸς καὶ χρῆσις τύμβου κατὰ τὴν ΜΕ Ι, μόνον, φάσιν ...'

[3] References in the format **A1.*x*.y** refer to illustrations in appendix one, where ***x*** is the number of the site in the site catalogue, and **y** is the illustration number within the site entry. References in the format **A2.x** or **A4.x** refer to illustrations in appendices two and four, respectively.

There is therefore no strong case for dating either of these monumental burial sites to the early helladic period, but there is strong evidence to suggest that they were built and used in the middle helladic period. Having said that, this discussion has not touched on the fact that many of the mounds in the area under study are unexcavated, and the attribution of date is based on the extensive surveys of the 1950s and 1960s, where sherds that were used as dating referents have not been published. Nevertheless, argument in current debate tends to centre around the proposition not that the tumuli should be dated earlier, but rather that some might well post-date the bronze age (Davis *et alii* 1997, 485-488; discussed in appendix three).

In any case, it is clear from excavation that some at least of the Messenian mounds date to the very beginning of the middle helladic period. In the light of the discussion so far in this chapter, an EHIII/MH date may simply correspond to the first recognisable ceramic phase after EHII in this particular region. These monumental tombs are a phenomenon that is present for the whole middle helladic period in the region.

It remains to consider the tumuli at Olimbía in Ilía. Two were discovered during the excavations in advance of the construction of the new museum (Yialoúris 1964, 174-176; Koumouzelis 1980, 139-140; Forsén 1992, 88-89), but only one was investigated. It consists of an elliptical circle (**A4.2**), 3.17m to 3.79m in diameter, of river stones about 2 or 3 courses high surrounded by a linear circumference of similar stones making a circle about 5m in diameter, which is in turn surrounded by a 'paving' of small stones 1m to 2m wide, making a total diameter of between 6m and 10m. Koumouzelis states that 'the inner part ... was 1.2m deep' (1980,139), which is confirmed neither by Yialoúris' description nor by his plan and section (**A4.1**). This plan and section in fact suggests that the 'tumulus' is not raised at all above the ground, and this also appears to have been Yialoúris' impression: he calls it 'a circular floor' and 'an altar', as he found traces of burning among the stones. Koumouzelis adds that pithos sherds and bone fragments were found, which she felt were 'undoubtedly signs of a pithos burial'. However, she also notes that no other signs of burial were found below the stones when they were excavated.

There is no particular need to take the pithos sherds and bone fragments as indicators of a pithos burial which would necessarily need have lain on top of the stones (hence Koumouzelis' assertion that there ought to have been a mound on top of the stones). The bones were burned and became so as a result of exposure to the fire on top of the stones. This may indicate cremation or the partial burning familiar from Stenó on Lefkádha; there is however no

indication that the bone fragments were analysed, and therefore we do not even know if they were human. The excavated tumulus is dated 'Lerna IV:1-2' (that is, EHIII) by Forsén.

A third tumulus exists in the Altis at Olimbía, originally excavated by Dörpfeld (1935), and recently reinvestigated (**A4.3**; Catling 1988, 27; Kyrieleis 1990, 186; French 1991, 31; discussed fully by Forsén: 1992, 92-93). This tumulus is now dated to the EHII period, and again there is no specific evidence that it was funerary in nature: few details are available of the architecture.

These monuments and others, particularly those at Stenó on Lefkádha (**A4.4**; Dörpfeld 1927), have been used in the past to invoke invaders from the north (Hammond 1967; Hood 1986, 54-59). As noted above, the idea of an invasion bringing about the end of the EHII phase is no longer widely accepted; nevertheless, it is often still suggested that some diffusionist mechanism might be apposite in explaining the appearance of tumuli in Greece (Müller 1989; Forsén 1992, 232-237). Forsén's summary of the argument concludes that while the numbers of early helladic tumuli are too few to support any theory of immigrants from the north, it is possible that this feature travelled south from Albania to Ilía and eventually Messinía via the Ionian Islands. The Albanian evidence is particularly difficult to assess. Hammond, for example, in pursuit of his thesis that the builders of tumuli in Albania were of the same 'stock' as those that built the grave circles at Mycenae, which he regards as tumuli, suggested that many of the tumuli of Albania contained material that should be equivalent to middle helladic material. An alternative explanation, perhaps alluded to by Hammond (1974, 129), would be to see tumuli as artefacts found throughout a region of intense contact in western Greece and Albania. The material cultures of these areas are however not generally bracketed, and so this explanation seems rather unlikely.

The tumuli of Lefkádha and Olímbia are chronologically distinct from those included in this study. Burial under tumulus is a common enough phenomenon in different times and places that there is no pressing need to rely on a diffusionist explanation for its appearance unless there is some specific point of similarity. The tumuli of Lefkádha and Olimbía, as well as those included in this study, form a group of heterogeneous monuments that require no single explanation. The simple fact of a burial under a mound in itself is obvious enough to be open to regular independent invention.

The middle helladic period

Forty of the sites under discussion in this thesis certainly, probably or possibly have a middle helladic component. Only a tiny proportion are explicitly dated to MHI or MHII (table 1.7 below), and even with these few the chronology is often unclear. There are two explanations for this: on the one hand, a subdivision of the middle helladic pottery sequence has only really become possible in recent years (defined for Messinía by Howell: 1992), so that middle helladic pottery identified in older excavations was simply identified as 'middle helladic'; on the other hand many MH burial mounds are unexcavated, and so their chronologies are imprecisely known, based only on field survey (tables 1.9 & 1.10 below).

The effect of this is exacerbated by the larger number of MHIII sites now identified (table 1.8 below), leading to an apparent dichotomy between MHI-II and MHIII. Although this would appear to be a real increase in number, the large number of unexcavated sites, many of which would be likely to predate MHIII in their foundation, must be borne in mind. While it is impossible to understand their position in the chronological sequence of monumental burial forms in the area under study, nonetheless they stand mute witness to practices that were more widespread than the excavated evidence alone would allow.

The MHIII-LHI transition and the inception of the 'Mycenaean period'

In the whole period that we are dealing with, the principal innovation in pottery style is usually taken to be the adaptation of Minoan pottery to form the late helladic I style at the end of the middle helladic period. LHI-style pottery did not, however, replace the earlier styles; all of the MH styles continue to be made and used throughout the LHI chronological phase and into LHII. Lewis (1983, 115) notes that the percentage of pottery of LHI style recorded by Blegen in LHI levels at Korákou is as little as 3.1%, and surviving MH types still make up 49% of the LHIIA assemblage, and rather less in LHIIB. Davis (1979, 238) points out that the scarcity of coarseware sherds preserved in the excavation archive suggests that these were discarded before recording; these percentages therefore refer to fine pottery only (at *30:Nihória*, coarsewares made up to 70% of MHIII and LHI deposits: Dickinson 1992, 472). Davis (1979, 254) says 'it is clear that often, especially in the case of simple, more plain types, no fine distinctions can be drawn between pottery of the later Middle Helladic and earlier Late Helladic periods. The date of many pieces cannot be precisely determined without knowledge of their context'. Moreover Dickinson (1974, 119) suggests that LHI pottery is generally poorly made and painted in comparison to LHIIA, which is closer to later Mycenaean pottery in terms of quality.

These observations lead to the possibility that past interpretations of the chronological implications of ceramic contexts have been based on a false assumption that the ascription of date is primarily based on the presence or absence of Mycenaean pottery styles (Rutter 1993, 756 note 36). Moreover, Mycenaean pottery styles are first made or imported to sites at differing times: at *57:Ayos Stéfanos* in Lakonía, for example, Rutter & Rutter (1976) show that 'Minoanising' pottery is present in MHIII deposits, whereas LHI pottery appears fully formed at *30:Nihória* in Messinía (Dickinson 1992, 473), although at that site transitional MH-LH deposits are not well represented (*ibidem*).

If therefore LHI pottery might make up a very small percentage of the total pottery of the LHI period for any given site, in the relatively closed context of a burial, often associated with a small number of pottery items, it is clearly a possibility that only middle helladic styles of pottery may be present in any given burial, even if the actual date of deposition should be LHI (or even LHII, although this is much less likely).

The MHIII-LHI period is crucial for the evidence under study in this thesis. This period of about 150 years is one in which certain innovations took place in funerary customs in the region, and by the end of the period new practices had become traditional. This study will show these changes as a series of related phenomena observable throughout MHIII-LHI; the difficulty in setting individual artefacts and monuments on one or other side of the MHIII-LHI transition is therefore not a major problem, and moreover a specific MHIII-LHI transition point is of little importance, since the changes referred to do not constitute a single, sharply defined event.

In traditional terms the interface between the end of the middle helladic period and LHI marks the sharp transition to the Mycenaean period. The shaft graves and the assumed Mycenaean social structure that goes with them mark this sudden transition in the Argolid; elsewhere, the introduction of Mycenaean pottery is a sign of the same sudden social change. This traditional viewpoint has been seriously eroded, beginning with Dickinson's *Origins of Mycenaean Civilisation* (1977), and particularly in the work of numerous scholars in the past decade. The understanding that Mycenaean pottery is not a unitary phenomenon is one aspect of the emerging complexity of the period; the study of burial customs presented in this thesis is another.

The LHI-IIA transition, and the LHIIA and LHIIB periods

'LHI-IIA' is an undefined transitional phase, a designation often given to pottery exhibiting characteristics of both LHI and LHIIA phases. It is not clear to what extent LHI-IIA might coincide with Lólos' 'late phase' LHI pottery, which seems in any case known mostly from certain settlement deposits (Nihória, the east house at Peristeriá: Lólos 1985, 537-540).

LHIIA is recognisable as a phase through very characteristic pottery such as the 'palace style jar', based on Minoan LMIB styles. There are numerous intact or recognisable LHIIA contexts in the tombs under study, both in those continuing from the previous period and in those seemingly constructed in this phase.

LHIIB on the other hand is much more problematic. Few instances of LHIIB pottery are noted in excavation reports, perhaps because it is less characteristic than the LHIIA pottery, and might often be described as 'early Mycenaean' or simply LHII. Dickinson, however, commenting on the LHIIB assemblage from the Nihória excavations, says

> The rate at which the LH decorated ware developed in LHII does not coincide with that of the other categories, and the changes are minor in comparison with the degree of overall similarity between LHII groups. Thus, there seems little point in discussing LHIIA and LHIIB separately. This would involve much repetition and might beg the question, for the sequence observed at Korakou (Dickinson 1972) cannot be paralleled at Nichoria. It does not seem that the local potters simply reproduced the stylistic sequence of the NE Peloponnese; rather, they appear to have concentrated on a few preferred types, which they sometimes continued to produce after these had become obsolete in the NE Peloponnese.
>
> Dickinson 1992, 481.

Dickinson here refers to the evidence from only one site, and with few well stratified deposits; nonetheless, the general concept of regional variation in early Mycenaean pottery styles is now broadly accepted, and if Lakonía and Messinía were particularly early in adopting Minoan-style fine decorated pottery as the LHI style (Lólos 1985), then perhaps they may equally have been late in adopting a particular LHIIB assemblage, or indeed the LHIIB repertoire may have differed from region to region throughout the period. Perhaps a better indicator of a late date within LHII generally would be an assemblage with fewer continuing MH-style types[4].

[4] These points ought to be clarified to some extent in Mountjoy's imminent work on regional Mycenaean pottery styles, which I have not seen. One question would be whether 'palatial style' Mycenaean pottery might continue in production into LHIIB in these regions, in which case all of LHII would be well represented in the funerary archaeology.

Brief overview of the material under study

The material of this study comes from sixty-one sites that range from single burials to cemeteries of multiple-burial chamber tombs, and from pits in the ground to the most monumental of tholos tombs. These sites may be arranged and grouped in a number of ways: a brief critique of the taxonomy of Mycenaean and pre-Mycenaean burial customs is presented in chapter two. Nevertheless, in order to achieve an overview, sites in this section are arranged using standard typologies in order to familiarise the reader as quickly as possible with the material.

Table 1.2 lists non-monumental burial sites[5] (excluding simpler graves within multiple burial monuments). These generally consist of burials or cemeteries that are no longer visible after the inhumation and whose graves are usually built for one person; they are often found within or adjoining settlement. The graves consist of pits in the ground, pits outlined with stones at ground level, pits fully lined with stones or slabs ('cists'), and burials in large jars ('pithoi') set in pits in the ground. Among these sites there are eight related to settlement contexts and a further six that may be related to settlement contexts:

Site		Related to settlement?	Number of graves	Number of inhumations	Chronology
3	Nisakoúli	Yes	3	>3	MHII-III
9	Karatsádhes Loutró	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	MH
24	Englianós	Unknown	1	0	?MH-LHII
35	Peristeriá (child cists)	Yes	9	9	(MHIII)-LHI
37	Málthi	Yes	48	71	MHII-LHIII
41	Filiatrá Stomion	Yes	1	1	MHII-III
45	Makrísia Arnokatáraho	Unknown	1	Unknown	LHII
48	Miráka	Yes	8	Unknown	MH
50	Armátova	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	MH
51	Análipsis (cist grave)	Unknown	1	Unknown	Unknown
53	Menelaion	Yes	6	6	MHII-III
55	Amikléon	Yes	4	Unknown	MHIII-LHI
56	Yeráki	Yes	3 (or 4)	3 (or 4)	MH
57	Ayos Stéfanos	Yes	63[6]	67	MH-LH
59	Pavlopetrí	Possibly	37	Unknown	Unknown
61	Krokeés	Unknown	1	Unknown	LHII-III

Table 1.2. Non-monumental burial sites.

Even this most basic division between monumental and non-monumental is of course subjective. One of the graves at *53:Menelaion*, for example, is a shaft grave. Moreover, all graves require

[5] Sites appear more than once in the tables where they are made up of different categories of monument.
[6] Work of the first three seasons only: see entry in Appendix One.

an effort of construction, and some are embellished with stone outlines, stone-lined walls or covering slabs.

Those sites that remain form the monumental class. They can be broadly divided between burial tumuli, tholos tombs and chamber tombs:

- a tumulus is a mound created above ground of heaped earth, stones, or earth and stones, with burials inserted into it (for example, **A1.*21*.5**, **A1.*21*.6**, and **A1.*14*.5**). These burials may be housed in pits, outlined pits, cists, pithoi or tholos tombs set within the mound;
- a tholos tomb is a stone-built burial chamber (for example, **A1.*34*.1** and **A1.*35*.58**) with a single entrance consisting of a tunnel-like entryway ('stomion', for example **A1.*34*.2** and **A1.*35*.66**) into the chamber and often a long narrow approach to that entryway ('dromos', for example **A1.*35*.57**). The chamber is round and corbelled (so the layers of stone converge on high to form an apex). The tholos is often but not always built partly underground; it may be set in a mound, or a mound may be thrown up around the above-ground part; alternatively it may be covered in thick clay. Burials may be left on the floor of the chamber, or set in pits, cists or pithoi: these graves may also be found to contain disarticulated bones;
- a chamber tomb is similar in form to a tholos tomb but it is not stone built, but rather carved out of the ground, often on a sloping surface. Its chamber may be round, sub round, sub rectangular or rectangular (for example **A1.*52*.4** and **A1.*52*.6**). Burials again may be set on the floor or in graves such as pits or cists; disarticulated bones may also be found, often in niches in the wall dug at floor level.

Divisions need not be clear cut: tholos tombs may be set within tumuli, for example. The following tables present the material according to traditional typological divisions.

Site		Basic description
1	Finikoúnda	Possible tumulus, unexcavated
2	Evangelismós	Single unexcavated tumulus with pithoi
4	Mesohóri Gdhiti Rahi	Possible tumulus, unexcavated
5	Yálova Paleohóri	Possible tumuli, unexcavated
6	Píla Vígles	Possible tumulus with pithoi, unexcavated and destroyed
8	Handrinoú Kissós	Excavated tumulus with pithos and stone-enclosed burials; three other unexcavated tumuli nearby
14	Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia	Excavated tumulus with pithos and cist burials and central construction; four or twelve other mounds in the vicinity
15	Plátanos	Three unexcavated tumuli with burial pithoi and slab-cover stones
17	Voïdhokiliá	Excavated tumulus with pithos and stone-enclosed burials (see also table 1.5)
20	Tragána Kapoureíka	Unexcavated, destroyed tumulus with pithoi and slab-cover stones
21	Léfki Kaldámou	Six unexcavated tumuli with pithoi and slab-cover stones
22	Pírgos Tsoúka	Unexcavated, partly destroyed tumulus/knoll with pithoi and slab-cover stones
25	Dhivári	Excavated tumulus with at least one pithos burial
27	Roútsi	Three partly excavated tumuli with stone cists and pithoi (see also table 1.5)
28	Kánalos	Two unexcavated (one destroyed) tumuli with pithoi and stone cists
29	Válta Kastráki	Two possible unexcavated tumuli with pithoi
33	Milióti Ayos Ilías	Possible unexcavated tumulus with pithoi and stone-cover slabs
35	Peristeriá: Kokorákou	Excavated tumulus with pithoi (see also table 1.5)
43	Káto Samikó Klidhí	Five small excavated tumuli with cists; one tholos
46	Makrísia: Profítis Ilías	One excavated tumulus (or tholos tomb) with one pit burial
49	Máyeira	One excavated tumulus with pithoi

Table 1.3. Burial tumuli.

Site		Description
10	Gouvalári	Cemetery of seven tumuli, one of which contained ten small tholos tombs, another contained three, another one, and the others are unexcavated; two 'canonical' tholoi (table 1.5)
13	Kamínia	Tumulus with five small tholos tombs built in the periphery
30	Nihória Nikitopoúlou	Knoll with five small tholos tombs (see also table 1.5)
51	Análipsis	Eight small tholoi, uncertain location (see also table 1.5)

Table 1.4. Multiple small tholos tomb monuments and cemeteries.

Site		Description
7	Dhiódhia & Stréfi	One excavated tholos tomb, one or two others unexcavated
10	Gouvalári	Two excavated tholoi (see also table 1.4)
11	Akónes	Two excavated tholos tombs
12	Koukounára	Three excavated tholoi and perhaps two others unexcavated
16	Korifásio	One excavated tholos tomb
17	Voïdhokiliá	One excavated tholos tomb set in an older tumulus (table 1.3)
18	Tragána	Two excavated tholos tombs
19	Solinári Tourlidhítsa	One excavated tholos set in the remains of previous settlement
24	Englianós	Three excavated tholos tombs (see also table 1.6)
26	Halkías	Two excavated tholos tombs
27	Roútsi	Two excavated tholos tombs (see also table 1.3)
30	Nihória	Two excavated small tholos tombs (see also table 1.4)
31	Dhára (Fráma)	One excavated tholos tomb
32	Paleohória	One excavated tholos tomb
34	Kámbos	One excavated tholos tomb
35	Peristeriá	Five excavated tholoi (see also table 1.3)
36	Kopanáki	Three tholoi, two excavated
38	Xeróvrisi	One excavated tholos tomb
39	Psári	Two or three tholoi, one excavated
40	Filiatrá Ayos Hristóforos	One excavated tholos tomb
42	Kapláni	Two tholoi, one excavated
43	Káto Samikó Klidhí	One (or two) excavated tholos tombs (see also table 1.3)
44	Kakóvatos	Three excavated tholos tombs
51	Voúrvoura Análipsis	One excavated tholos tomb (see also table 1.4)
54	Vafió	One excavated tholos tomb

Table 1.5. Excavated tholos tombs.

Site		Description
23	Volimídhia	Cemetery of at least 34 chamber tombs
24	Englianós	Chamber tomb amid cemetery of later examples (see also table 1.5)
52	Pellána	At least six chamber tombs, one at least early
58	Epídhavros Limirá	At least five and probably ten chamber tombs
60	Sikéa	One excavated chamber tomb
62	Kíthira: Kastrí	At least seven chamber tombs and four natural rock-chamber tombs

Table 1.6. Chamber tombs.

Chronological study of the evidence

The problems of interpreting ceramic evidence for date were presented earlier in this chapter: here I present a chronology for the sites listed in tables 1.3 to 1.6, mainly on the basis of this ceramic evidence (for the chronology of non-monumental burial sites, see table 1.2). Full arguments are presented in the individual site entries in the site catalogue, appendix one, to which reference should be made. The following tables present the suggested construction dates for each site, and periods of use. Where the construction date is not certain, the ceramic evidence being used is the earliest datable evidence, but nevertheless either does not come from

a context that relates to construction or early use, or else other, more relevant material is not closely dated. Some sites have two entries here, for example *27:Roútsi* has separate entries for the tumuli and the tholoi. Reference should always be made to the relevant catalogue entry for details of chronological attribution.

Although it is necessary to establish a chronological framework for the discussion, that discussion is not dependent on details of chronology, which are in any case often questionable. What follows is not intended to represent a significant contribution to the study of the chronologies of these sites. Note that where 'possible' or 'probable' dates of construction are given, the actual date of construction might well predate that given.

Site		Construction date	Date range of use
14	Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia	MHI possible[7]	MHI-III
17	Voïdhokiliá	MHI certain	MHI-LHIII
27	Roútsi (tumuli)	MHII possible	MHII certain; MHI and MHIII possible
35	Peristeriá (Kokorákou)	MHI/II	MHI/II

Table 1.7. Sites constructed in MHI-II.

Site		Construction date	Date range of use
10	Gouvalári	MHIII probable	MH, LHI-IIIC
13	Kamínia	MHIII probable	MH, LHI-IIIC
16	Korifásio	MHIII certain	MHIII-LHI/II, possible LHII
23	Volimídhia Kefalóvriso 1	MHIII probable	MHIII
24	Englianós: Vayenás	MHIII possible	MHIII-LHIIIA1
30	Nihória	MHIII probable	MHIII-LHIIIC, protogeometric
35	Peristeriá (MH-LH grave)	MHIII certain	MHIII-LHI
43	Káto Samikó Klidhí	MHIII probable	MHIII-LHIIIC

Table 1.8. Sites constructed in MHIII.

Site		Construction date	Date range of use
2	Evangelismós	MH probable	MH
6	Píla	MH probable	MH
8	Handrinoú Kissós	MH probable	Probable MH-LHII; certain LHIII
15	Plátanos	MH probable	MH; likely LH
21	Lefki Kaldamou	MH probable	MH
22	Pírgos Tsoúka	MH probable	MH
25	Dhivári	MH certain	MH
28	Kánalos	MH probable	MH-LH

Table 1.9. Sites certainly or probably constructed in MH (general).

[7] Perhaps more likely to be MHII or even MHIII: refer to the discussion of chronology in the catalogue entry.

Site		Construction date	Date range of use
1	Finikoúnda	MH possible	No information
4	Mesohóri Gdhiti Rahi	MH possible	MH
5	Yálova Paleohóri	MH possible	MH
20	Tragána Kapoureíka	MH possible	MH
29	Válta Kastráki	MH possible	MH possible; LHIIIA1 certain
33	Milióti Ayos Ilías	MH possible	MH
49	Máyeira	MH possible	MH; LHIII

Table 1.10. Sites possibly constructed in MH (general).

Site		Construction date	Date range of use
7	Dhiódhia	LHI probable	LHI-II
23	Volimídhia	LHI certain	MHIII-LHIIIC
24	Englianós: tholos IV	LHI probable	LHI-IIA; LHIIIA
27	Roútsi (tholoi)	LHI probable	LHI-IIIA
32	Paleohória	LHI-IIA probable	LHI-IIIC
35	Peristeriá (tholos II)	LHI-IIA probable	LHIIA
35	Peristeriá (tholos III)	(MHIII)-LHI certain	Possible MHIII; LHI; possible LHIIA
35	Peristeriá (south tholos I)	LHI probable	LHI-IIIA
39	Psári Metsíki	LHI probable	LHI-IIIA
46	Makrísia: Profítis Ilías	LHI probable	MH(?), LHI-III
51	Análipsis (small tholoi)	LHI possible	LHI(?)-LHIII
58	Epídhavros Limirá	LHI certain	LHI-IIIC

Table 1.11. Sites constructed in LHI or LHI-IIA.

Site		Construction date	Date range of use
12	Koukounára	LHIIA probable	LHIIA-III
18	Tragána	LHIIA probable	Possible LHI; LHIIA; LHIII
24	Englianós[8]	LHIIA probable	LHIIA; LHIII
35	Peristeriá (tholos I)	LHIIA probable	LHIIA; LHIII & later
38	Vasilikó: Xeróvrisi	LHIIA probable	LHIIA; LHIII
42	Kapláni	LHIIA possible	LHIIA; other periods likely
44	Kakóvatos	LHIIA probable	LHIIA
51	Análipsis large tholos	LHIIA probable	Certain LHIIA; possible LHIII
52	Pellána	LHI-IIA possible	Possible LHI; certain LHII-III
54	Vafió	LHIIA probable	LHIIA; LHIII

Table 1.12. Sites constructed in LHIIA.

Site		Construction date	Date range of use
11	Koukounára Akónes	LHII probable	LHII-III
19	Solinári Tourlidhítsa	LHII possible	LHII-III
26	Halkiás Aeliás	LHII possible	LHII
31	Dhára (Fráma)	LHII possible	No information
34	Kámbos	LHII probable	LHII-II
35	Peristeriá (tholos V)	LHII possible	LHII certain; other periods?
36	Kopanáki	LHII possible	LHIIA
45	Makrísia: Arnokatáraho	LHII probable	LHII

Table 1.13. Sites constructed in LHII (general).

[8] Tholos 3 and chamber tomb E8.

Site		Construction date	Date range of use
60	Sikéa	LHIIB possible	Possible LHIIB; certain LHIII

Table 1.14. Site constructed in LHIIB.

Site		Construction date	Date range of use
40	Filiatrá Ayos Hristofóros	LHII-III possible	Possible LHII-III
61	Krokeés	LHII-III probable	Probable LHII-III

Table 1.15. Sites constructed within the period LHII-III.

The chamber tombs of *62:Kíthira*, not included in the tables above, date to MMIII-LMIB.

Topography of the southern and western Peloponnese

The study area was chosen to be as large and varied as could be examined in the depth necessary to achieve the aims of the thesis. Regional variation in funerary practice is thus open to study at the macro- and micro-regional level. Several factors made the area under study attractive: the use of the tumulus in the western Peloponnese, the appearance of the tholos tomb in Messinía, the proximity of the southern Peloponnese to Kíthira and Crete, and the 'unknown' archaeologies of Ilía and eastern Lakonía. The presumption of underlying cultural unity (chapter two) could be tested against the variety of data from the whole study area.

This area[9] comprises a little over a third of the total land mass (21,643km^2) of the Peloponnese, which is joined to the Greek mainland only by the narrow (about 5km) isthmus at Kórinthos. The Peloponnese in general is a highland area, much of the central and northern area, and elsewhere, occupied by mountain. The north and west coasts have mostly narrow plains and sandstone foothills. Elsewhere low-lying areas are few; the alluvial plain of Argos is the largest plain of the Peloponnese, and currently intensively cultivated. There are two others, those of Messinía and of Lakonía.

The Peloponnese is today divided into six *nómoi* (counties), and the modern borders of Ilía, Messinía and Lakonía are taken as the borders of this study, along with the island of Kíthira

[9] The details that follow are obviously not based on original research by me, although I have travelled extensively throughout the Peloponnese. I have used as a principal source for what follows the Naval Intelligence Division's *Handbook of Greece* (Darby 1944-1945), which describes the entire country in remarkable detail. For Messinía and southern Ilía, more details can be found in the University of Minnesota's Messinía Expedition (Loy & Wright 1972). Recent survey of central Messinía (the Pylos Regional Archaeological Project, particularly Zangger *et alii* 1997) adds some details for these regions.

(officially part of the *nómos* of Pireás, and often counted as one of the Ionian Islands). This area then includes the entire southern and most of the western coast of the Peloponnese (**A4.5**). The central mountain ranges form its northern and eastern borders, although this is not to claim that the area forms a natural unit: it is internally subdivided, sometimes by very high mountains such as Taíyetos between Messinía and Lakonía.

Lakonía

The mountains of Taíyetos in the west and Párnon in the east constitute the upper boundaries of Lakonía, almost forming a triangle to the north; between these mountains is the plain of Spárti, with the Evrótas, one of the two major rivers of the Peloponnese (the other being Alfeiós in Ilía), flowing through it toward the sea. The plain is well watered, especially to the north, by tributaries to the river flowing from the mountains. It has always been a settled area, and is currently richly farmed. Although the plain is broad and flat, with well defined edges, there is a number of low hills, and the foothills of Párnon approach the east bank of the Evrótas in places. One of these forms the location of *53:Menelaion* (**A1.*53*.4-7**).

South of the Spartan plain the land opens out toward the Gulf of Lakonía. The west of this region is an area of ridges and hollows, forming the foothills of Taíyetos. To the east is the coastal plain of Elos, until recently an area of swamp. These areas are at the head of the Gulf between the promontories of the Máni and Molái/Neápolis. The eastern of these promontories, although partly formed of bare hills that fall into the sea, particularly on the east, includes a number of plains. In the south is the plain of Neápolis (Vátika), and further north the larger plain of Molái; the west coast is much less rugged than the east. In the east of the Molái plain there is a gap in the hills leading to *58:Epídhavros Limirá* and Monemvasía.

The island of Kíthira is separated from the Molái/Neápolis peninsula by a strait 16km across. It is small, 30km by 18km, and mostly consists of a high plateau that slopes steeply into the sea. There is a low north-south ridge where most of the modern population is situated; to the east the plateau is slightly more dissected (the Minoan site of Kastrí is located on the east coast). The interior of the island is cultivable.

The western side of the Gulf of Lakonía is formed of the Máni peninsula, which is basically a continuation southward of the Taíyetos mountains. A narrow pass links east and west sides of the peninsula between Areópolis and Yíthio. The peninsula is rugged, and its east side bleak; on the west is a number of small coastal plains.

Messinía

The eastern end of Messinía is defined by the Taíyetos mountains, which separate it from Lakonía. The land to the west of Taíyetos is fertile plain, running north toward a range of hills (Mt Tetráyi) that enclose the Nédha river, the northern boundary of Messinía. These hills run east-west, joining Taíyetos at right angles and separating the Messenian plains from the basin of Megalópolis to the northeast. Immediately south of Tetráyi is an east-west corridor, the Soulíma valley, an important route from the coast to the plains of Messinía or into Arkadhía. The sea forms the western and southern boundaries of the province.

The Messenian plain runs from a narrow head south to the Gulf of Messinía. It is bounded by Taíyetos on the east and the central plateau of Messinía on the west. The plain is divided in two by a low ridge; at its north end (the Steniklarian plain), it meets the Soulima valley. The whole plain is fertile and capable of supporting a high density of population. The area is well watered and marshy at the Gulf.

The promontory of Messinía consists of higher land with narrow coastal plains bordered by highly dissected country. The coast as far south as Methóni and much of the inland area is highly fertile; some higher land inland and to the south is more barren. Except along the coast, there are few clear lines of communication inland. The bay of Navaríno is the largest harbour of the Peloponnese; it is sheltered by the long narrow island of Sfaktíria, thus forming a half-moon shape. Lagoons form at its north end, including the small bay of *17:Voïdhokiliá* (**A1.*17*.2**).

The Soulima valley in the north of Messinía, although less fertile than elsewhere in the region, was a centre of settlement in the bronze age (**A1.*35*.5-6**).

Ilía

Southern Ilía is dominated by the mountains that enclose the Nédha river. These form a triangle, and north of them the river Alfeiós, the second major river of the Peloponnese, runs northwest toward the coast. The western end of the Alfeiós is set in the broad lowland valley that encloses Olimbía. North and west from here, along the coast, is a broad coastal plain, often rather waterlogged, and now intensively cultivated. This plain contrasts with the mountains that form the eastern part of the region; originally heavily wooded, and in places suitable for cultivation, they are today sparsely inhabited. The north and east are separated from Ahaïa and Arkadhía by rivers and mountains.

The climate throughout the survey area is Mediterranean; the west (Messinía and Ilía) has more rain in winter and less in summer. The average summer temperature for Kalamáta and Spárti is about 27°C, the average rainfall about 90 days per year. Most waterways are seasonal, but groundwater is available close to the surface in most regions.

Most of the land is usable to some degree in farming practices. 40% of land in Messinía and Ilía is classed as arable, and most of the rest is suitable for grazing goats or sheep. The original timber cover of much of the higher ground may have been exploited in antiquity, as might the copper sources in Lakonía.

Site distribution, settlement history and the contribution of survey

The distribution of the 61 sites in this study (**A4.6**) is far from random. The majority of sites is concentrated in Messinía, and particularly in the *Kámbos* or plateau. To be precise, a large number of sites is located on and among the ridges that run generally westward toward the sea. Particular concentrations are to be found around what was to become the 'palace of Nestor' and to the southwest of there around the modern villages of Koukounára and Plátanos. Relatively fewer sites are located in the southern part of the promontory and in the hills north of *30:Nihória*. The other main concentration of sites in Messinía is along the length of the Soulíma valley. Of great interest is the complete lack of known sites in the Pámisos or Steniklária plains (a pattern that changes in LHIII).

North of Messinía, the distribution of sites in Ilía is concentrated around the Alfeiós river and on the coast south of there. This area accounts for only a small part of Ilía, yet only one site (*50:Armátova*) is located elsewhere in the *nómos*.

The picture in Lakonía is somewhat different. A number of sites is clustered around Spárti, but otherwise sites are few and widely dispersed in the area of study.

There is however some uniformity in site locations. Very few sites are located in very high or remote locations: exceptions to this rule are *39:Psári* above the Soulíma valley, nearby *26:Halkiás*, and *51:Voúrvoura Análipsis*. Equally few sites are located on the coast: *59:Pavlopetrí*, *3:Nisakoúli*, *43:Káto Samikó Klidhí*. A larger number of sites is within close reach of the coast, but located on akropoleis, ridges or plateaux above the level of the coastal plain; and almost all sites are located on eminences of some sort, whether close to the coast or not.

The distribution can be divided chronologically (**A4.7-9**). In Lakonía only *53:Menelaion*, *55:Amikléon*, *56:Yeráki* and *57:Ayos Stéfanos* include middle helladic material, restricting the distribution to the Evrótas valley and Lakonian gulf. LHI is even more restricted, represented at *55:Amikléon*, *57:Ayos Stéfanos* and *58:Epídhavros Limirá*; LHII is *not* represented only at sites *53:Menelaion*, *55:Amikléon* and *56:Yeráki*. It is worthwhile remembering that for *53:Menelaion*, although the known funerary structures are middle helladic in date, occupation at this site is well attested for all periods. The date of *59:Pavlopetrí* is not clear.

In Ilía, by contrast, three or four of the seven sites include middle helladic funerary evidence, two LHI, and three LHII.

In Messinía, of the 42 sites in the catalogue, excluding sites where dating evidence is insecure, and counting only dating evidence related to the mortuary elements of sites, 23 sites include MH material, 12 LHI, and 19 LHII. In terms of any possible regionalisation in distribution, no areas seem to be unrepresented at any stage, save perhaps the southern part of the peninsula in the early Mycenaean period. In LHI, where the number of sites is fewer, the distribution is restricted to the area around and to the southeast of the palace of Nestor; LHI is elsewhere represented at *30:Nihória* on the gulf, and in the Soulíma Valley at *39:Psári*, *35:Peristeriá* and *37:Málthi*.

Before considering the implications of this analysis, it is worth remembering that the sample of sites is restricted to those with funerary evidence. We should therefore consider how the distribution of these sites compares with that for other sites of this period. The most up to date picture of distributions is given by Siriopoúlou's catalogue of sites (1994, 1995; **A4.10-12**). As these maps are divided by period, the most striking thing about them is the vastly greater number of middle helladic sites as compared to either late helladic I or late helladic II. This can in part be explained by the relative difficulty of isolating LHI or LHII sherds in surveys, especially extensive surveys, because - as noted above - much pottery that is LHI-II in chronological date is MH in style.

Nevertheless, the basic pattern established in the distribution pattern for this study (**A4.7-9**) is maintained in Siriopoúlou's maps. In Ilía, sites are clustered along the Alfeiós and on the coast south of there; in Lakonía, sites are found in the Evrótas valley or toward the Párnon peninsula; in Messinía, particularly in MH, sites are to be found everywhere, including upland areas, although less densely distributed in the south of the promontory or in the Messenian part of the

Máni; the LHI-II distribution matches that for this study, concentrated on the plateau and the Soulíma valley.

These distribution maps are representative not of the overall distribution of sites in the past, but of the distribution of sites recovered in archaeological work, which has not been equally intensive in all areas. Messinía and southern Ilía were subject to the extensive surveys of the *University of Minnesota Messenia Expedition* (McDonald & Hope Simpson 1961, 1964, 1969; McDonald & Rapp 1972); Lakonía was similarly but less intensively surveyed (Hope Simpson & Waterhouse 1960, 1961); most of Ilía has not yet been so surveyed. The lack of sites north of the Alfeiós is perhaps thus explained[10]. Is it also possible that there being fewer sites in Lakonía is explained by the less intensive nature of the survey of that province? One approach to this question is to compare the results of the earlier extensive surveys with more recent intensive surveys: those of central Messinía (the *Pylos Regional Archaeological Project*: Davis *et alii* 1997, Zangger *et alii* 1997) and of Lakonía (the *Laconia Survey*: Cavanagh *et alii* 1996).

The *Laconia Survey* covered an area about 70km^2 to the northeast, east and, less intensively, southeast of Spárti (Cavanagh *et alii* 1996, illustration 24.1; at the time of writing, the archaeological data have been fully published but the general description, volume one of the survey, is not yet available). The total number of sites located and dated specifically within the range MH-LHII (hence excluding generally LH or bronze age) is fifteen[11]; of these, only one (the Menelaion) was previously known from the surveys of Hope Simpson and Waterhouse (1960, 1961).

The *Pylos Regional Archaeological Project* has surveyed an area about 40km^2 (Davis *et alii* 1997, 391 and figure 2). The areas surveyed were not contiguous, and although much of the area around the palace of Nestor was covered, sampling design sought to include coastal, plateau and mountainous areas: *PRAP* results may therefore be more generally applicable. Examination of the preliminary site gazetteer (Davis *et alii* 1996) suggests that, of twenty sites examined by *PRAP* and found to have material of MH-LHII date[12], thirteen were known to the Minnesota Messenia Expedition, and one further site is anyway in the vicinity of the palace of Nestor.

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[10] Sperling's survey of central Ilía was interrupted by the war: he made few prehistoric discoveries, and found no funerary evidence (1942).
[11] K249, K515, M322, M349, N413, N191, Q360 (the Menelaion), R291, R292, R457, R3025, S434, S478, U492, U514: Shipley 1996b. One of these sites (R3025) is outside the area of intensive survey.
[12] A02, B05, B07, C01, C02, C03, C05, D01, D02, D03, G03, I01, I02, I03, I06, K01, K02, K03, L01, M02: Davis *et alii* 1996. Inventory sites outside the area of intensive survey are excluded.

Six new sites in a total of twenty is a very different picture from that presented by the data from Lakonía (fourteen new sites in fifteen). Although the interpretation of neither survey has been published, many of the small sites discovered by the *Laconia Survey* are clustered around the Menelaion and the general Spárti area. The area given for the Menelaion is about 25ha; the largest of the other fourteen sites is 0.4ha, and most are smaller than 0.1ha. By contrast, among the *PRAP* examples, site areas are generally larger and much more variable. The palace of Nestor covers 18ha, but there are other large sites such as Órdhines (K01, 4.64ha), Beïlérbeï (I01, 12ha) and Pórtes (I03, 11.06ha). Leaving aside tholos tombs (C05, I02, I06), one site is smaller than 0.1ha (C03 Tragána Vouroúlia, a site partly excavated by Marinátos and presumably originally occupying a larger area; remains are likely to have eroded away; see the catalogue entry for *18:Tragána*, note 1), three further sites are smaller than 0.4ha, and eight sites in total are larger than 1ha. These data suggest quite strongly that the nature of the sites discovered by the two surveys is different: larger, nucleated settlement sites are common in Messinía, although small sites (individual farm buildings?) are also present; in the area around the Menelaion, however, only very small sites are present.

These observations suggest that the McDonald & Hope Simpson settlement distribution is reasonably accurate for Messinía, but that there is a good chance that the Hope Simpson & Waterhouse distribution has missed, at least in some parts of Lakonía, a pattern of small sites. These observations are most directly applied to non-cemetery sites. Of the six new sites discovered around Pílos, none is immediately associated with burial, although that is naturally not excluded; for the fourteen new sites discovered around the Menelaion, again none is clearly a cemetery site, although slabs that had been removed from the ground in modern agricultural practice at site M349 are suggested to have been associated with bronze age burials. This raises the question of the extent to which intensive survey can be expected to increase our knowledge of cemetery sites where extensive survey has already taken place. Before the advent of intensive survey, cemetery sites were located either because they had been disturbed in some way, by agricultural practice or road building for example, or because they were easily located in extensive survey due to factors such as positioning, clear visibility in the landscape or local knowledge. Cemetery sites by nature contain closed and buried deposits, and where not marked in some way (by a mound, for example) will not be discovered in intensive survey. Settlement sites, on the other hand, are associated with accumulated débris over a relatively wide area, and there is a general likelihood that some of this débris will be visible on the surface. Occasional examples, such as the possible cist graves mentioned for M349 in Lakonía, will be found, but in general I would suggest that intensive survey is not best suited to add to the corpus of known cemetery sites where extensive survey has already taken place.

The implications of this are difficult to judge. On the one hand, it may be that a good number of monumental funerary sites has already been discovered for most of the area included in this thesis; on the other hand, it is inevitable that many of the dead must have been buried or dealt with in some other way. I would suggest that our main deficiency in coming to an understanding of burial traditions is linked to the general problem of lack of excavations of middle helladic and early Mycenaean 'settlement' sites. 'Settlement' is a word applied in surveys and site distributions to all sites that are not suggested to have any more specific meaning (funerary sites or other specialist sites, such as workshops). The word 'settlement' masks our almost complete ignorance of the natures of these sites, something that will be alleviated only slightly by the continuing publication of intensive survey results. An excavation programme that targets 'settlement' sites for these periods is desperately needed. Only through such a programme is an understanding possible of what these sites represent, in terms of what sorts of buildings might be found there and ultimately what were the routines of daily life for the inhabitants, and how far these sites can be compared with each other. Such a programme may well answer the questions surrounding the burial of most people in the period, since it is clear that the known funerary monuments can hardly have catered for anything like the whole population. Sites like *57:Ayos Stéfanos* or *37:Málthi* provide hints that burial within nucleated settlements, or nearby, might have been common.

Thus the apparent clustering of known funerary sites, most of which are monumental in the landscape, may be a genuine phenomenon, rather than a result of sample bias (although the lack of extensive survey in most of Ilía leaves the possibility that that area is incompletely known). This clustering, in the Messenian plateau, the Soulíma valley, around the Alfeiós, and around Spárti, can therefore be examined as a consequence of human action in the past; this is one of the central questions to be examined in this thesis.

Chapter Two

Mortuary practices - the view from the Aegean

Introduction[1]

From the moment of Schliemann's excavation of the shaft graves (Schliemann 1878), Mycenaean funerary architecture and practices have been a focus of much excavation and interpretation. This chapter highlights some of the recurrent themes in traditional analyses, and briefly positions this thesis among more recent publications.

There is a large literature on middle helladic and early Mycenaean burial practices, exhibiting a number of different approaches to the evidence and analytical methods. The recently published Sheffield Round Table (Branigan 1998), for example, contained papers concerned with the creation of Mycenaean social structures through the transformation of burial practices (Voutsaki 1998), regional variation in individual funerary rituals (Cavanagh 1998), the meaning of eating and drinking rituals in the mortuary context (Hamilakis 1998), and engendered studies of mortuary data (Mee 1998). The approaches and techniques evidenced in that volume, however, represent a late diversification of interests in theoretical approaches to funerary customs.

Of the numerous themes running through writings on death in this period, two interconnected issues have dominated the debate: the status of the individual dead, and the place of mortuary

[1] Two books published in 1998 were received too late to be properly taken into account in writing this brief literature review: Cavanagh & Mee, and Branigan. In writing this section I should like to echo the thoughts of Dickinson (1977, 6) that detailed criticism of previous work is tiresome and unpleasant: this chapter constitutes a review of two specific trends, and not the work of individual scholars.

customs in the establishment and maintenance of the Mycenaean 'civilisation' or Mycenaean 'state society'.

The status of the dead

> The dead do not participate in their own funeral, nor is the entire essence of the social system mapped out by this single practice.
>
> Barrett 1988b, 31.

Cavanagh & Mee, in their recent (1998) review of *Death in Prehistoric Greece*, devote their final chapter to a study of status and identity in tombs and graves. This is in part a culmination of their previous work on status and social differentiation (Mee & Cavanagh 1984, 1990; Cavanagh & Mee 1990). In introducing the subject, they note that the equation of status with elaboration of funerary architecture or ritual has been challenged in recent years: they quote Hodder (1982), who suggests that while burial ritual *may* reflect some or other aspect of society, it may equally distort social relationships.

Status has nonetheless been an abiding concern of Mycenaean mortuary studies. In a very important article in 1983, Dickinson summarised the main terms of the debate at that time: in many ways that summary remains relevant to the state of the discipline today. His approach to status is clear: 'the degree of elaboration of the tombs, and the quantity and value of the goods placed in them, have direct relevance to the status of the buried persons' (Dickinson 1983, 56). On the face of it, this seems an obvious, common sense assumption; it follows from the work of Saxe (1970) and Binford (1971), and set out as follows in 1981 by J. A. Brown:

> the social persona (or overall status composite) of the deceased will be symbolised in funerary and mortuary behaviour ... the funerary rites and burial will be affected by the size and composition of the body of individuals recognising some social tie or linkage with the deceased.
>
> Brown 1981, 28.

These precepts, more or less as Binford formulated them[2], pretend to be the application of theory derived from anthropology to archaeology; in fact, there is nothing that Tsoúndas, for example, would not have recognised in separating tholoi and chamber tombs between the rich

[2] There are 'two types of social phenomena symbolized or recorded in a burial situation. The first was the *social persona* of the deceased; the second was the composition and size of the social aggregate recognizing status responsibilities to the deceased ... the second component will exert determinant effects on the form which mortuary rites will take' (1971; republished 1972: 232).

and the poor, princes and commoners (Tsountas & Manatt 1897, 131). This simple equation (elaboration of funerary rites = status of dead person) has always been and remains a basic assumption in Aegean mortuary archaeology. It did not need the Saxe/Binford/Brown 'revelation' to come into existence, even if interpretations and analyses based on it were and remain unsophisticated (more complex analyses of highly variable mortuary data were pioneered in the Aegean by Morris: 1987, discussed by Shanks: 1996, 135-138; and on Mycenaean data by Cavanagh: 1987, and Cavanagh & Mee: 1990).

In attempting to assign status to the dead (or more generally to users of a tomb), the aim of analysis is taken to be divisions in society, social differentiation. The analysis seeks to identify those accorded burial in one or other tomb form, and those not so accorded burial, and to 'read off' status from that. Other variables, such as the number and 'value' of grave goods deposited with the dead, or in a tomb, might also be assessed in order to refine status.

While Hodder (*ibidem*) criticised the assignation of status on the ground that funerary ritual might not reflect but distort social reality, there is a more fundamental criticism of this approach. Any assignation of status to the dead that claims to reflect an actually existing social reality in the past is an attempt to describe society in structuralist terms. It is evocative of a society of named rôles forming part of a structured whole in which the subject is subordinate to her place in society. It suggests that the proper object of archaeological study is the structure of society, to be understood through discriminating between and defining its constituent elements - in this case, *rôle*.

The question of differentiating between these elements of social structure has been approached through the methodological analogue of the process of differentiation between the products of the archaeological record - classification or *taxonomy*.

Taxonomy is a part of the way we think. It is fundamental to language, since the ability to communicate is dependent on the ability to apply different nouns to different objects or concepts. This in turn is dependent on the ability to distinguish between *things*, and moreover to do so in a way that is recognisable and seems logical to those others with whom we are communicating. Talk depends on a shared recognition of the object of discussion, or on the ability of one speaker to communicate the concept of the discrete object to another.

Taxonomy is the basis of archaeology. Excavation can only take place if the excavator feels confident to distinguish between the products of excavation, and the process of excavation itself

is intensive in its requirement on the excavator to distinguish: discrimination is the principal mental activity of the excavator. In areas like the Aegean, where the material record is particularly rich, taxonomy as applied to artefact finds becomes a skill. Institutional structures - universities, government bodies - tend to dictate that the most important skill that an archaeologist possess be taxonomic: the ability to be an expert in some broad material category[3]. Skills of excavation itself are valued far below an ability to interpret the products of excavation in a fit manner: typically, the senior members of a research excavation will be involved in some way in finds processing, while the supervision of digging is left to students and the actual digging to local workmen, who may or may not be experienced. The primary field skill in the Aegean is not the excavation and recording of context, but taxonomic pottery knowledge.

This expertise is hardly neutral: the sorting and categorising of material is not an objective activity. This is not in itself a problem, as long as the point is accepted. However, the impression one gets of the elaborate taxonomies of Aegean archaeology is that they are presented as neutral. The ordering of material is seen as a largely scientific exercise, and any wider interpretation of that material, a subjective exercise, can only take place after the scientific work of taxonomy has finished. In many ways, interpretation is expected to arise *out of* the ordering of excavated material (Shanks 1993, 1996; Morris 1994).

The crux of the problem is that the ordering of material is related to the past in an uncomplicated manner. If one accept that the ordering of material is scientific and somehow 'correct', this implies that the ordering is something other than a product of our own minds; it implies that the ordering reflects, however imperfectly, some past reality. The interpretation of the past, or at least some aspects of it, is seen to arise directly and reliably from a 'good' ordering of material (Shanks & Tilley 1992, chapter seven).

The ordering of material has also been important to understandings of Mycenaean tomb architecture, and moreover the concerns of taxonomy can be seen to underlie a concern with the status of the dead. Wace (1923) presented an evolutionary tholos typology based on stylistic observations; Evans (1929) accepted the importance of style but suggested regression rather than evolution. In both cases the typology could be mobilised in explanation: for Evans,

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[3] Both Shanks (1993, 1996) and Morris (1994) have stressed the importance of the proper interpretation of style in 'classical archaeology', but neither has investigated the rôle of taxonomic skills in the practical reproduction of the discipline.

the magnificent 'early' tombs were indicative of a Minoan dynasty, whereas for Wace the tombs were a local development, albeit with some degree of Minoan 'influence'.

A hierarchical typology of Mycenaean tombs and tomb types, at least in its simplest form (the notion that tholos tombs were for more important people than chamber tombs) is present in almost all writing on the subject: Dickinson (1983, 56-58) codifies and makes explicit the format of the typology and many of the assumptions in it. Perhaps most telling is the fact that the typology is not strictly based on architectural features or material culture finds: Dickinson accepts that some tombs *ought* to be of different status (have a different hierarchical position) than that suggested by 'objective' factors (architecture, 'wealth'): it 'seems quite misleading' to class smaller tholos tombs with larger tholos tombs on the basis of shared architectural features[4], when larger tholos tombs were 'quite clearly the burial-places of important personages'. Hence that larger tholoi were for the important becomes a premise, rather than a result of interpretation; that smaller tholoi were not for the important is apparently self-evident. Status - that of the tomb or the dead within - is therefore the principal ordering factor within tomb typology. Status creates tomb typology, and it is seen to be embodied in the typology; status may also, however, be inferred from an understanding of typology.

An argument that the status of the dead need not be reflected in factors such as architecture and 'wealth' would therefore undermine the basis on which the conventional understanding of burial practices is based. 'Social systems are not constituted *of* rôles but *by* recurrent social practices' (Parker Pearson, quoted by Barrett: 1990b, 160). The common and defining feature of the otherwise disparate post-processualist approaches in archaeology has been the emphasis on human agency. The key is not to dispute whether rôles existed in past societies, but whether they are a fit category for archaeological analysis. Rôles, instead of being fixed and empirical, a property relating to the social structure, are instead actively *maintained*, and indeed manipulated, by actors. In a study of humanity rather than social 'systems', the actor is the subject, not a series of abstracted rôles. If the rôles of the dead did play a part in funerary practice, it can only be *through the agency of the living* who organise and take care for the funeral. The rôle of the dead is a product of the funeral itself, and more specifically of the *taking care* of that funeral by the living; it is related to that individual's life in an indirect manner through the interpretation of those who take care of the funeral. In this way a king may well have an elaborate funeral, but only because such a funeral comes about through the agency of

[4] Dickinson does however claim that 'it is not always clear that they were domed like true tholoi': 1983, 58. There is little doubt that the examples discussed in this thesis were so domed.

those who are still alive and actively want and create an elaborate funeral. Hence for an archaeology of humanity the subject of study in the mortuary field is the living, not the dead.

What, then, of the status of the dead? It will be argued in chapters three, four and nine that through study of the actions of the living in the mortuary arena, one can gain real insight into the nature and reproduction of social structures - the 'recurrent practices' mentioned above. Such an analysis should respect the complexity of past societies, rather than reducing the question to the rôles and status of the dead.

The description of a human being in terms of rôles can be used to uphold a fairly simplistic structuralist view of the world. By *structuralist* I mean here that the social world is seen to be composed of certain fixed underlying laws that govern possible outcomes in an overall, bounded 'scheme of things'. Structuralist archaeology would seek to define those boundaries and the underlying laws operating within them. This is equivalent to the 'new' or processual archaeology of the 1960s to 1980s which sought as its goal the definition of laws of human behaviour in much the same manner as the natural sciences sought to isolate and define laws of nature. These laws were to be broad-based and generalising, and hence widely applicable. The operation of these laws could be used in a predictive manner in different circumstances (discussed widely in the literature, for example Shanks & Tilley 1992, chapter two; Barrett 1994b, 157-164).

In processual archaeology the human being is decentred and marginalised. She is seen to be part of a process of which she is probably only partly aware, or (more often) her understanding of the process has been distorted by the operation of ideology, which is seen as a mechanism for social control that obscures the real relations between people. Social structures in processual archaeology can be described without any reference to the *activity* of the human being, since freedom of action is seen to be limited by the parameters of the structures being described, and so highly predictable. Hence the descriptions of processual archaeologies often reduce the human being to a series of rôles prescribed by the process itself.

This structuralist conception of rôle is important for the other main theme of recent discussion of burial practices: the 'rise of the state' or the 'development of Mycenaean civilisation' (for example, among others, Wright 1995, 1987, and Dabney & Wright 1990; Voutsaki 1995; Bennet 1995; and many of the papers in the *Thanatos* volume: Laffineur 1987). In the absence

of the much desired precursors to the LHIII palaces, funerary evidence has proven a rich source of apparent confirmation of the stratified nature of society in earlier periods, and is regularly brought into play in confirming the early genesis of the kings and officials of a Mycenaean society 'revealed' by the Linear B tablets and LHIII 'royal' abodes.

These questions about the development of Mycenaean civilisation are always framed in a retrospective fashion. For example, Bennet asks

> How did Bronze Age Pylos - the *pu-ro* of the Linear B tablets; the site centred on the palace at Ano Englianos - become the only palatial center for a 2000-km^2 area of the southwestern Peloponnese by the late LH IIIB period?
>
> Bennet 1995, 587.

Questions about the development of Mycenaean civilisation assume that LHIII (perhaps specifically LHIIIB) Mycenaean culture is a known quantity. In many cases it is clear that this known quantity derives from the interpretation of Linear B archives, interpretations superficially confirmed by the archaeology of the period. The research problem is therefore framed thus: we know what society (specifically, the *social system*) was like in LHIII(B), so how can we work back from there to the simplicity and poverty of the middle helladic period? For example, Bennet again:

> the most effective way of addressing the question is, first, to reconstruct the political geography of the polity in LH IIIB - the period immediately preceding the palace's destruction, *ca.* 1200BC - on the basis of the Linear B documents; and, second, to trace the origins and development of the system attested in LH IIIB using the *diachronic* perspective afforded by regional archaeological data from late-MH to LH IIIB.
>
> Bennet 1995, 587; emphasis in original.

What is assumed to be given in these analyses is the systemic nature of the state in LHIIIB, and the evidence sought is for state formation processes. These studies are firmly rooted in processual archaeology, and their genesis can be traced back to the interest shown by Renfrew in such questions, and not only in the Aegean (1972; Renfrew & Cherry 1986).

Despite this superficially processual framework for analysis, it is clear that the basic understanding of 'Mycenaean civilisation' is a culture-historical one: as perceptively noted by Jones (1997, 27-28), although processual analyses downplay the cultural-historical framework, nonetheless they often rely on that framework for closure in the system. Closure in this case is represented by the extent of Mycenaean civilisation spatially and temporally. This extent is

defined by those archaeological remains that are culturally regarded as Mycenaean, and for the earlier period these are limited to Mycenaean-style pottery (and, to a much lesser extent, Mycenaean-style artefacts in general) and Mycenaean burial customs.

Of these two classes of evidence, pottery often seems to provide the 'background' - the extent, perhaps, of 'Mycenaean', while dynamic aspects of the system are represented by burial customs. For this reason Mycenaean burial customs have been made to bear the brunt of theorisation in respect of the origins and inception of Mycenaean civilisation (as for example with Bennet 1995, already quoted above, Dickinson 1977, and numerous examples cited at the beginning of this section; more emphasis is given to pottery and wider categories of evidence in Rutter's 1993 review). Although disparate methodologies are employed, and different routes from the poverty of the middle helladic period to the acme of civilisation are postulated, the premise is largely the same: the roots of later Mycenaean complexity can be studied in the social stratification apparent in earlier Mycenaean tomb types.

It is not necessary to stress that the cultural-historical approach has come under intense scrutiny and criticism in both processual and post-processual archaeologies (for example Renfrew 1974, Shanks & Tilley 1987; Barrett 1994b; Jones 1997); it is curious that the impact of these fundamental reviews has been so negligible in the Aegean (see Morris 1994 for the divergence of archaeology in Greece from archaeology elsewhere). In recent years, however, numerous voices have stressed the importance of regional archaeologies, particularly in the field of pottery studies; Voutsaki (1998) has introduced the same idea to the study of mortuary archaeology.

Mycenaean civilisation of the LHIIIB period can no more be explained by recourse to the mortuary evidence of earlier periods than it can be adequately characterised from Linear B evidence (Darcque 1987). An understanding of the archaeology of either period must be firmly grounded in the evidence. Status and rôle can no more be simply 'read off' the evidence for 'palaces' than from tholos and chamber tombs. This thesis presents an attempt to understand the archaeology of burial customs in a specific place and time, and shows that the writing of history demands first that this be done for all the periods and places such a history seeks to address, and second that social differentiation in society cannot be understood from evidence derived from contexts (such as monumental burial forms or, indeed, 'palaces') divorced from the everyday, routine reproduction of that differentiation.

Chapter Three

Theorising landscape, action and the mortuary locale

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to sketch an outline theory of human action with particular emphasis on those aspects of action related to the construction and use of tombs and cemeteries.

The reason for presenting such a theory is that this thesis is concerned not only with *how* people acted but also *why*: in other words, not merely describing the evidence, but explaining it in relation to the ultimate objects of study, society and the individual human being. A theory of action therefore must also address the conditions under which people act: the context and motivation for action.

This chapter will not set out a prescriptive theory to be tested against 'the data', nor will it provide explicit hypotheses regarding the relationship between the observed remains and past reality. Many attempts at explicit theorisation consist first of theorisation, often in structuralist form, and then a demonstration that data patterns 'fit' the theory. Such theorisation, although often intended to be general in application, tends to adopt certain very specific assumptions; the 'data' seem to fit the theory well, but the whole is rather inflexible (see for example Shanks and Tilley's consideration of Renfrew's systems theory as applied to Aegean prehistory: Shanks & Tilley 1987, 31-36).

Instead of introducing a theory that attempts to explain patterns within observed data in terms of structural analysis, this chapter's aim is much more basic. It is an examination of the *conditions under which people act*, with special reference to the questions under consideration in

this thesis. As such, it is an examination of *human agency in relation to society*. These concerns are not specifically archaeological: they are shared fundamentals in all of the humanities. The aim here is to approach an understanding of what sorts of conditions might prevail on human agency in the areas of mortuary practice through an understanding of social theory.

The approach adopted here is post-structuralist and is based primarily on the work of Antony Giddens (1979, 1984). Giddens is a sociologist, who developed his theory of *structuration* without any thought for its application to archaeology. Nonetheless, it has found general acceptance among a number of what might be called leading post-processual theorists in archaeology (for example Barrett 1994b, Tilley 1994).

In brief, structuration sets out to prioritise human agency in social theory while at the same time developing a more sophisticated analysis of structure, seeing structure as a *product* of action, routinely reproduced but nonetheless open to continual revision (the 'duality of structure': Giddens 1979, 4-5; 1984, 25-28). This analysis of society is apposite to a study of funerary practices that seeks both to understand how and why people acted within the circumstances of individual funerals, and longer term questions concerning the maintenance and development of funerary traditions.

This chapter therefore sets out to create a framework within which mortuary practices may be studied, and its principles, not the product of a specific archaeological context, ought to be widely applicable.

The aims of the study

Having set out the general scope of theorisation to be developed, the basic questions that the study seeks to address should now be made explicit, so that the theory can be examined with those particular questions in mind.

The following are the most basic aims of this investigation:

- locale: where in the encultured landscape did people situate burials, tombs and cemeteries; how were such places approached and occupied, and what was their place in the wider landscape?

- architecture: what was the effect of funerary architecture on those approaching, entering, leaving or using a tomb; why was architecture modified?
- instances of human action in the mortuary sphere: what did people do in the tombs, and what can be understood of their society from their actions?
- longevity: how are practices and traditions reproduced and transformed through time; what did it mean to reuse a tomb; how do traditions become widespread and how can we understand that in local and regional terms; how are burial places maintained and transformed through many years of use?

Before seeking to answer these questions with specific reference to archaeological evidence, this chapter considers how one can answer such questions in relation to an understanding of how people act in society.

Basic theory of human action

Action is incomprehensible if unrelated to two of its fundamental aspects: locale, and the human body. Locale describes the physical and social context within which action *takes place*, while the human body is the medium of action.

Action and locale

'Locale' refers specifically to the human understanding of place, thus differentiating abstracted space, topography or place from locale as a mental and social construct.

This understanding is primarily a product of *knowledge*. Knowledge in this instance refers to memories of a place and the acts that have taken place there; understandings of social contexts of the place and the actions that have taken place in it; and expectation of actions that will take place there in the future, along with experiential knowledge of 'how to go on' in such a place in given circumstances (Barrett 1994b, 72-77; 1988a; Giddens 1984, 118-122). The memories, understandings and expectation are personal but nonetheless subject to discussion and modification in the face of the perceptions and knowledges of others. Moreover such knowledge is not static but is continuously re-evaluated in the face of everyday experience and social conditions.

In the foregoing definition locale is understood primarily as the context for action. A knowledge of the sum of routine and extraordinary action at a locale is employed in reaching a social understanding of the meaning of the locale. In coming to understand a building as a house, for example, the sum of the acts of routine domestic occupation, along with the social knowledge of what constitutes an inhabited dwelling, would lead to the conclusion that the building is a house. Were routine domestic occupation to come to an end, the house would undergo a transformation in how it was perceived, leading to its being understood as an abandoned house. In this case, the physical attributes of the place are unchanged; the change in how the place is occupied (the routine actions that occur there) leads to a change in how the place is understood. The understanding of locale is therefore dependent on human action, and locale is simply the human understanding of place.

If an understanding of locale depends on action, so an understanding of action is dependent on locale. Action must occur somewhere, and so locale provides a context for action (Tilley 1994, 19; Giddens 1984, 118). Apparently similar actions are open to widely differing interpretations (and motivations) in different contexts. Eating food, for example, a superficially simple action, is in most societies one of the most significant of human actions. The context of eating is crucial to understanding the motivation and meaning of the act. Part of that context is provided by locale, so that eating in a private dwelling is to be understood differently from eating in a public setting, or eating in a tomb. Action is so bound up with locale that the one cannot be understood without the other, for the simple reason that the one cannot exist without the other.

Each locale is unique, and each understanding of it is also unique. However, for the purposes of this study one can differentiate between four broad categories of locale. These are locales routinely occupied by those we are studying, locales occasionally occupied, locales occupied by different groups of people, and mythical or extremely remote locales. The modes through which these different types of locale may be understood differ, and so each is considered separately below in relation to human action.

Locale and routine action. Locales subject to routine occupation are the places where the routines, traditions and basic institutions of everyday life are reproduced through repeated and predictable activity (Barrett 1994b, 74; Giddens 1979, 216-222). *Routine* is one of the most powerful concepts for understanding how the apparent structures of society are reproduced through action. In structuralist thought and particularly in processualist archaeologies the routine is often a regime imposed by the structuring forces of society; people have little understanding

of their actions, and can only break free of the cycle by attacking the structure of society. As has often been pointed out, this comprehensively underestimates the ability of people to understand the conditions in which they find themselves, and manipulate them. A re-evaluation of this concept is the first principle of Giddens' structuration theory: that structure is both the medium *and the outcome* of action (1984, 25-28). Routine action would therefore be seen as everyday activity tending to conform to shared ideas of society and to reinforce social structure.

Giddens distinguishes between three types of consciousness in relation to action (1984, 6-7). This is a simplification of the way people think, but it is a useful model in understanding how different types of action are motivated and thought about as they are undertaken. In *discursive* consciousness action is carried out with conscious thought and under constant review (action is 'monitored'); one thinks about what one is doing, questioning the reasons for and efficacy of the act. In *practical* consciousness action is carried out without explicit consideration, and is only monitored in terms of acting as expected. Practical consciousness is the way in which nondescript, everyday activities are carried out. The third type of consciousness is the *unconscious*. The unconscious can provide part of the motivation for action carried out in discursive or practical consciousness. Actions in discursive consciousness are questionable and considered; they are not routine. Actions in practical consciousness are not questioned and are only cursorily considered; they are routine. Such actions can however be questioned and considered should circumstances change: so routine actions are not normally controversial but can become so. Where unconscious motivation is present, this is a partial barrier to acting in discursive consciousness.

These concepts are crucial both for understanding the routine and for a clear understanding of how the 'structures' of life can be reproduced and transcended by human beings. Routine, everyday activities are produced in practical consciousness and in general need not be closely considered or regarded as controversial. It is the everyday occurrence of these activities that gives society the appearance of cohesive structure, but it is the everyday repetition of these activities that creates social structure. The ability of the actor to question or consider any aspect of the routine empowers the actor and society or groups within society to change or modify apparent social structures.

Structure, then, is reproduced in the routine, and is open to manipulation. Any interpretation of the past that imposes a structure or seeks to identify a monolithic, unchanging structure is simply wrong: social rules are always open to testing and change, and structure exists only in the moment of action. An understanding of routine should be a principal goal of archaeology in

approaching the past, and the remains of settlement sites are excellent research material toward this goal.

Routinised activities create routinised locales; the longevity of locales is explained by their everyday reproduction in routine action. The understanding of everyday locales comes from repeated and anticipated action in that locale. This is a very basic mode of the reproduction of any social group, whether it be a village or any other corporate group. The institutionalisation of routine practices comes about in this way, and a social institution can often be partly defined by locale (Giddens 1984, 118).

Locales and tradition. Locales occupied occasionally are maintained other than by routine occupation and action; cemeteries, tombs and graves fall into this category. Locales outside the routine are principally maintained through discourse and memory, and occasional action. The structuring principle of action at such locales is *tradition* (Giddens 1984, 200; Barrett 1994b, 36).

The place of tradition in understanding how people acted in these locales is parallel to that of the routine in routinely occupied locales. Tradition is therefore one of the central themes in approaching the core aims of this thesis. Tradition can be seen as a shared body of knowledge consisting of practices, memories, mythologies and histories, maintained in a more or less controlled manner through time for a given social grouping. Traditions are however negotiable and insubstantial, and they do change from generation to generation. Specific institutions may exist for the maintenance of tradition, and the degree of sophistication of such institutions may reflect a certain hierarchisation of society. The most sophisticated mechanism for maintaining tradition is the written archive; the appearance of an 'objective' written record marginalises alternative discourses. Other institutions might be named social rôles, for example priest or shaman. Such institutions might reproduce themselves through the control of knowledge and its controlled propagation in an apprenticeship structure. In less hierarchised societies control over traditional knowledge may be widely distributed through the population.

In actions that partly depend on tradition, there may be much negotiation over procedure. Competing knowledges of tradition empower agents in negotiating their rôles in that which is to be done. In a funeral, a possible area of conflict might be between agents of an institutionalised religion and family members with knowledge of family or local traditions, for example. A funeral will be carried out as a composite of acts carried out under the authority of varying recollections of tradition.

The shared understanding of tradition is therefore a discourse between competing authorities instantiated and realised in the moment of action. Action in these locales is therefore largely carried out in discursive consciousness and with a much heightened monitoring of the actions of self and others. Examples of such locales other than in the mortuary sphere might be cultic sites, places where everyday occupancy is forbidden or subject to restrictions (such as a chief's house or, for the uninitiated, some place only open to initiates), places routinely occupied by those regarded as belonging to another grouping, and so on. Each of these examples is not a part of the routine yet is maintained as a 'known' quantity through memory and talk.

Locales and social groups. Some locales are routinely or occasionally occupied by different groups. These groups might be sub-groups or corporate groups within a larger social entity, or might consider themselves 'separate groups' or communities. Along with the elements of tradition just mentioned, it might be the case that competing claims of legitimacy in action or occupation would characterise the interaction of these groups at the locale. Examples of such locales might be religious sites, and indeed some of the tombs to be studied in this thesis might have been subject to competing claims of rights of access during their life cycles. Interpretation and knowledge of tradition ultimately remains the field of discourse for the playing out and resolution of the claims of different groups with respect to locale.

The mythological locale. Finally, one other category of locale is the mythical or extremely remote locale. It is important to mention these places for completeness of the theory, but they have little bearing on the present study. Examples of such locales for different peoples might be paradise, Mt Olympus, or (in some extreme cases) the next village, the next island. The understanding of such locales is maintained purely in memory and discourse and is not the subject of actual experience.

Action and the human body

So far we have considered the location of action; now we must consider the medium of action, the human body (Barrett 1994a, 91-92; 1994b, 72-73).

The interface between locale and perception is the human body. Understanding how people acted in the past can only come about with an understanding of how the body can act and perceive, as constrained and facilitated by the properties and resources of locale: architecture, space, material culture. We can begin with some very basic observations. Movement is

conditional on the interplay between the dimensions of the body and the scale of architecture or surroundings. A vast hall facilitates free movement; a narrow tunnel constrains it. Movement is also constrained by the number of others present: hence movement in a vast hall might be subject to constraint if the hall is filled with others. The human frame and the scale of architecture also have a bearing on *presence*, the mostly non-verbal projection of self to others.

The human body is profoundly and unavoidably *oriented*. That we have a front, a back and two sides is not a cultural construct; it is inevitable through the regionalised nature of our perception, particularly sight, and the way that walking forward is the only easy way to walk. Movement has a beginning, a pathway, and an end, during which the orientation of the body is crucial to how we inhabit space. The location of our eyes, toward the front of our heads, ensures that the orientation of the head is fundamental to perception. The front is where most contact work takes place; only under special circumstances does interaction take place back to back, for example.

The perception of locale is very dependent on these physical features. The immediate interpretation of locale is coloured by our perception of front and back places, most immediately defined by the orientation of the body. How actions are carried out is partly dependent on this interpretation. It is for this reason that, in attempting to understand how people might have inhabited past locales, a plan and section are distracting. They place the archaeologist in the position of privileged observer, able to survey the whole at once. Action did not take place under such conditions: an understanding of locale comes through entering into and inhabiting it, to the extent that the remains permit us to do so.

Interaction is a highly oriented affair. It is carried on through words, intonation, facial expression, movement of the head, expressive action of the limbs, orientation of the body and manner of holding oneself; where culturally acceptable, there may be much touching or stroking. All of this is likely to be carried on front to front, and where a different orientation is used, there is likely to be a special explanation, such that using a different orientation becomes part of the interaction as expressing deference or arrogance, and so on.

These observations on the human body should lead to particular questions of locale[1]. How many people could occupy a place, comfortably or at a push? In what way does any architecture act

[1] In reviewing Tilley's (1994) consideration of embodied experience of landscape, Brück (1998) argues that the variability of human experience is partly rooted in the body, in other words that the experience of (for example) moving through a landscape is not universal but unique, individual and determined by differing characteristics (male, female, tall, small, physical ability) as part of individual consciousness. My

to constrain movement or orientation or perception? In what ways is the body free to move and perceive? If specific activities are suggested by material remains, given the answers to the first questions, in what ways might those activities have been carried out? Answers to these questions, as I have suggested, depend first on entering past places using our own bodies to suggest ways in which those in the past might have used theirs.

The encultured landscape

The foregoing has considered human action in terms of its medium, the human body, and its setting, the locale. The idea of the locale must be developed in two directions: first, in this section, the place of the locale in the wider landscape, and second, in the next section, the effect of the properties of locale on human action.

In order to adequately theorise landscape it is necessary to move away from the 'distribution map' style of landscape analysis and consider ways in which the landscape might have been understood by those who inhabited it in the past. In this I am following on the work of Tilley (1994), Barrett (1994) and Giddens (1984).

The encultured landscape consists of a nexus of interconnected locales. For each individual, its core consists of a complex web of routinely occupied locales and the connections between them, while at the edges of the nexus lie the less routinely occupied locales, mythical or remote locations, and a generalised idea of a wider landscape beyond experience.

This landscape, as a mental construct, might be understood through the term *topography*. The constituent roots of the word are *topos* (τόπος), meaning place, and for our purposes *locale*, and *graphi* (γραφή), writing. *Topography* is used here as the active production of a web of meaning linking the locales of life and mythology (compare Tilley 1994, 43-47: Ayers Rock in Australia is 'perhaps the most striking example of topography embodying living mythology'). Topographies are personal, contingent and constantly subject to revision. The basis of topography is the linking of locales, routes and the wider landscape in an extremely complex manner involving knowledge (as defined above), and its production is through the practical and discursive acts of moving through and between locales. Some locales will be linked by well-

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remarks on the body in relation to landscape and architecture have been aimed not at specific historical reconstruction but at understanding what factors might structure the multiple possibilities of interaction between the human frame and landscape and architecture. I accept however that my brief analysis takes no account of differing physical abilities.

travelled paths, others more tenuously or not at all; and outside these areas exists the sum of the rest of the landscape, seen or imagined but not travelled. Such a topography is in a state of continuous flux, as paths change or horizons shrink and broaden.

The interconnections of locales in this topographic nexus are equally complex. Any given path will itself have some of the properties of locale: it may be referable in speech, (for example 'the path to the windmill') and it may have physical properties (a worn path or a road). But paths might also be defined simply by destination, duration, and a series of known points or locales *en route*. Such a path is produced in action (that is, in *going*), and may have no other existence. The reification of the path - its being made manifest in the worn track or in the building of a road - is a result of the daily or otherwise regular reproduction of routine activities, of going from place to place. Routinisation of paths in this way causes the path itself to be a referable artefact, a locale in itself, and one open to modification (a well used path could be made into a road, or a road become lined with settlements, or tombs).

Topography therefore relates both to an idea of how different places are linked, and the actual physical act of moving from one place to the other. It is therefore experiential, rooted in the human body and personal knowledge. Nonetheless topography has a shared aspect: at the core of routine action is social sanction, and since that routine action is situated, social sanction applies also to the locale. Topography therefore includes an understanding of the landscape as inhabited by others, and a shared, social understanding of the landscape (Tilley 1994, 27). If we are to approach the landscape in search of some understanding of its interpretation by those who came before us, these are the fundamental concepts to grasp.

Although the workings of topography as described may seem clear in relation to the locales of everyday life, it may be less obvious how the wider landscape can be part of such understandings as well. The scale of knowledge of the wider landscape depends on the level of mobility and nucleation of the group or groups with which any given person might interact or belong. Nonetheless, it is clear from many cultures around the world, not least our own, that the wider landscape is brimming with named locales (Tilley 1994, 18-19). A knowledge of wider landscape is articulated around the naming of the otherwise meaningless progression of valley, hilltop or mountain crag. The names might refer to the nature of the place, or be simple references to stories and people, historical or mythological, that work the landscape intimately into how the community understands itself. The ancient Greek landscape was populated by miscellaneous gods, demi-gods, heroes, nymphs and spirits, all rooted in place (and pre-existing any later cultic building). To some extent the saints of the Orthodox church perform the same

rôle in post-Roman times (numerous peaks are named after *Profítis Ilías*). Landscape can therefore be understood and inhabited with reference to shared mythology.

These locales are the building blocks of topography. They link inhabited locales with each other by paths that pass by natural features of the landscape often richly inscribed with cultural meaning. In this way the reproduction and recreation of mythology and the stories that communities use to understand themselves (and hence, in a partial sense, social structure) is bound up in the simplest acts of moving from one place to another.

This understanding of landscape, personal and contingent but in large sense shared with other group members, may well be contested between people and groups. Different groups moving through or sharing areas of land may understand places through different names and different histories: competing claims to knowledge.

With the landscape already populated by name and meaning, new projects such as houses, villages, farms, plantations or indeed cemeteries are created not in the vacuum of a 'new' site, but rather in a matrix of complex, interrelated meanings imparted to that new project by its relationship to the encultured landscape as understood by those building, using or shunning the place.

Although this web of insubstantial and shifting meaning might seem ephemeral, the archaeology of landscape is open to us, from tomb to settlement and back again. The ascription of meaning to landscape often leads to physical alteration: in the historical period, for example, the construction of cult buildings in places sacred to one god or another. This monumentalisation of the landscape at its most intense is an archaeological artefact that remains for us from the prehistoric period throughout the mainland: the tombs of Mycenae, or of the Potámi tou Arápi (sites 10-13, **A4.13**). Grave, tomb and cemetery in the encultured landscape are the subject of chapter five.

Some aspects of the mortuary locale

There is huge variation in mortuary practice and in the remains left for archaeologists. Very often, remains are simply absent; sometimes we suspect that the remains we have recovered cannot account for the whole population, suggesting possibly institutionalised differentiation in funerary practice. Casual disposal of the dead is rare, however, and often demands special

explanation, such as disregard for enemy dead in warfare. For most, if not all cultures, then, there are good reasons for approaching mortuary data with complex questions. One reason is the often high quality of the preservation of contexts in burial sites; another is the special nature of the practices evidenced in those contexts. With an adequate theorisation of how people act in complex circumstances such as these, it should be possible to develop insights into the conditions of the acts we recover.

The mortuary arena is bound up with that most upsetting of the events of life: death. Other, less immediate, aspects are often present: in many cultures death is understood, at least at a community level, through religious or spiritual means; and in some cultures the dead, as individuals or as a corporate group, are continually presenced[2] at mortuary sites through 'ancestor rituals'. Hence we might expect the mortuary arena to cater for practices that address some or all of these issues: disposal of the corpse, the working through of grief and perhaps the frantic reworking of social relations in the absence of the dead, 'correct' behaviour in relation to religious or spiritual motivation, and activities in relation to ancestor cult or worship. Where any or all of these motivations are present, they tend not to form separate categories in the minds of those involved: they are all aspects of the whole issue of dealing with death. Moreover, any or all of these activities (except disposal of the corpse) may take place in part or full away from the mortuary locale or in an archaeologically invisible way.

In using the term 'ancestor ritual' or 'ancestor cult' I am conscious that different definitions exist and that, for some people, ancestor cult can only be understood as specific worship of the ancestors. In this thesis I adopt the following definition for ancestor cult: ancestor cult is any activity that either *seeks to presence* or *tends to presence* the ancestors or the dead among the living (in the first, presencing the ancestors or the dead is an intended outcome; in the second, it is a consequence of action not directly intended).

The aspects of the mortuary locale and human action to be considered here are the locale in the landscape, the rôle of architecture in practice, the rôle of material culture, and the life-cycles of monuments and traditions.

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[2] By 'presence' I mean bringing into the mind in a very immediate way the memory of the dead; this need not be straightforward. If the dead are invoked in order to pronounce opinion or settle some current dispute or problem, the presencing of the ancestors is likely to be controversial.

The mortuary locale in the landscape

The place of the mortuary locale in a known landscape, where topography is learned and maintained as social as well as private knowledge, where landscape is understood through names and histories ascribed to places, ought to be open to interpretation. Such an interpretation should focus on two issues: the position of the locale in the topographic nexus, and its maintenance through time.

Given the incomplete nature of archaeological knowledge for any given area, the place of the cemetery site in local and regional topographies is one of the most intangible of research questions. Normative assumptions aside (for example, 'each cemetery is associated with a settlement site'), the lack of information on settlement makes it difficult to place cemeteries in the inhabited landscape[3]. It is however possible to study the landscape context of a cemetery site in terms of internal factors, such as the number of tombs and their spread, and in terms of a wider landscape of burial grounds. This refers to a subset of the inhabited landscape - the mortuary landscape, a concept that may have been meaningful in some past times and regions. Some funerary acts might be partly understood as incorporating the dead into a landscape already rich with ancestral signification. These ideas are not to be taken as given, but the archaeological evidence might bear out such lines of interpretation.

The architecture of the mortuary locale

Locales may well be built structures, but they could equally be open spaces, natural features (a cave is a good example), or modified natural features. The boundaries of locale are not generally fixed, except when specific architecture acts to create a clear boundary. Otherwise boundaries are created in the *praxis* of action and situation (Barrett 1988a). The naming and maintenance of locales which are entirely unmodified natural features is an aspect of the enculturation of landscape, as described above.

There is a range of interpretations to be associated with architecture, from the intentions of those who built it to the interpretations of those who have inhabited it, including ourselves. Understanding the form of a monument alone cannot explain to us how it was used or understood in the past, or even what its makers intended by it. Instead of trying to intuit a

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[3] Although the final publication of intensive surveys may eventually improve the position, a detailed programme of settlement site excavations is required in order fully to understand how the landscape was occupied.

meaning from form alone, we should rely on two sources: first, the evidence of what activities might have taken place as preserved by the remains in the monument (examined in the next section), and second the possibilities for action as allowed for, controlled or prevented by the architecture.

Architecture influences perception and movement. This is its physical aspect: most obviously, architecture is likely to close off or bound an area. Even where the area remains largely open, such as the area under a colonnade, it is still clearly bounded by the architecture. More regularly the architecture will close off from view much or all of the bounded space. It may well create a specific point of entry: a threshold, defining the point of movement from one place to another.

Architecture often respects the idea of front and back, which is derived from the body itself. The most obvious examples of this are places where people gather, such as theatres or stadia, where specific architecture faces many people toward a centre. Less obvious but no different is the position of the hearth in a house: in many cultures, the hearth is the focus of the room. The architectural focus is therefore derived directly from the orientation of the human body. A doorway is itself a focus, especially from the outside. Within, all sorts of focal points may be available as resources to be called upon in action. Some of these may not be strictly architectural at all, but are artefacts intimately associated with the place, on which more below. Ultimately, however, any focal point can only be realised in action: the focus of a crowd on a stage is created in their collective orientation to the stage; the focus of one approaching a doorway is created in the act of approaching.

Scale more than anything else enables and constrains action and directly affects the numbers of people likely to be present. One should recognise that scale as enabling and constraining works both ways: for example, while at first glance the fact that a tiny chamber tomb constrains the possible numbers of people inside, and limits the possibilities of expressive action, one can equally say that it enables the discrete, secret gathering of a limited number of people to carry out hidden activities. At the opposite end of the spectrum, while large scale architecture enables free movement, or large gatherings, it prevents small scale, secret activities from taking place. Both aspects of scale should always be considered.

Beyond the action of architecture on the physical and perceptive human frame, there is a whole range of possible secondary inferences in the interpretative process. This is because meaning is not constructed simply of the physical nature of architecture. These secondary inferences involve knowledge: the meaning of the building as suggested by memory of its construction or

of previous experiences there, myth or stories told about and heard of the building, and symbolism discerned in the architecture.

Construction as a phase is extremely important in our interpretation, and will be considered below. For those who were involved in or witnessed construction, whether of a great monument or a simple hut, a great deal of their idea of the meaning of the building will have been fixed at that time. Construction involves time and effort, and is out of the routine (except for corporate groups who specialise in construction); it brings together a group of people who will later share a bond of their mutual involvement in the building phase. Construction is also important because it is during construction that the idea of the building is realised, and the realisation, being the product not just of the architect but also of the builders, may well be a fraught experience.

Knowledge is not directly a feature of architecture, but of locale in general. However, the interpretation of architecture is altered by previous experience if that experience allows for insight that the normally architecture denies. Hence, where lately closed off places have been visited before, their hidden or secret nature is refined by an anticipation of what might go on within. Thus is architecture embedded in tradition.

Without knowledge or tradition architecture in itself would not necessarily reveal its meaning and purpose. Tholos tombs were thought by Pausanias to be store-houses for treasure, as also suggested by some of the early travellers to Greece. Thus the meaning of architecture need be maintained as part of the knowledge of the locale; this issue will be taken up below.

Material culture and practice at the mortuary locale

Before considering the rôle of material culture in the locale in general, or the mortuary locale in particular, we must pause to consider how material culture is understood by its users and later by archaeologists. Much recent theorisation of material culture emphasises its active rôle in society.

Artefacts do not carry a meaning of themselves (Barrett 1994b, 168-170). Every act of ascription of meaning to, or inference of meaning from an artefact, is a socially and culturally embedded act. This is what it means to say that material culture is socially, historically, actively and meaningfully constituted (Shanks & Tilley 1987, chapter 4; Barrett 1994b, 169): it has no meaningful existence outside the interpretations of those who made, used and deposited it.

In a similar way material culture is a resource that we use as archaeologists to produce our own understandings, and it has no meaning until it is given by us (Barrett 1994b, 169).

That an artefact has no single, empirical meaning is one of the most fundamental tenets of post-processual archaeologies. Interpretative strategies that prioritise the ordering of material on the basis of some arbitrary feature (style, decoration) above study of the contextual associations of material and structures will necessarily lose the contextual detail required for an interpretation of how people may have acted in that context. Many early excavation reports describe objects found in greater or lesser detail with virtually no information on context; even in recent excavations, context is secondary to the perceived innate qualities of the artefact.

Having identified archaeological context as the primary source of evidence for action in the locale, the poor recording of context becomes a methodological problem. In this thesis I deal with this problem by attempting to reconstruct as much information as possible about context for each grave or tomb (detailed in individual catalogue entries: appendix one), but it will be clear from studying chapters seven and eight that much more satisfying interpretations are possible for sites with better recording.

An artefact goes through three phases of incorporation in human activity: production, use, and deposition. All three phases may be present in the mortuary sphere. Although I will argue that objects were rarely made for specific burial ceremonies, production seems to have been a part of the rite at one tomb at least[4]; and funeral ceremonies obviously called for the use and the deposition of artefacts. In each case the meaning of the artefact is defined through its use (that is, through action), and so both meaning, action and motivation ought to be open to investigation.

Material culture and architecture are both actively constituted; in practice, the difference between the two is portability. Artefacts can be picked up, moved around and broken, while architecture, once complete, is largely given, unless a new construction phase is undertaken. The boundaries between the two are movable: a pithos inserted in the floor is immovable and becomes an architectural feature, while a door may be taken off its hinges, and hence detached from the architecture to become a portable artefact once more. In practice, the difference between architecture and material culture is likely to be the extent to which architecture affects the body, while the body affects material culture.

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[4] There is sporadic evidence for stone-working at *39:Psári*; Carter has demonstrated a similar phenomenon for EBA Crete: 1998.

Material culture is brought into any locale to be used, and is therefore part of a strategy for structuring action. To explain what this means, think along these lines. If I enter a room carrying a pot, the question is not so much 'what am I doing?' but rather 'what am I doing with the pot?' I *act with* the item. This is the rôle of material culture in the tomb. For us as archaeologists, material culture should not merely represent grave goods or funeral gifts or the possessions of the dead, and it is more than a chronological referent: it is the present material remains of the actions that the mourners carried out at one or many mortuary ceremonies. If we can recover to some extent what people did in the tomb then we are some way to recovering the meanings the acts held for them.

In the interpretation of past meaning, what is the place of the corpse? Given that this chapter is setting forth an outline theory of action, there is clearly no active rôle for the corpse. In approaching the mortuary ritual, the concerns are to understand *what* people did and the *meaning* they derived from it. The focus of interpretation is therefore not on the person represented by the corpse, or his or her 'status' in life or society; but rather on those who have come together to work through the funerary rites, and their grief, for that person. In theoretical terms action on the corpse is to be interpreted just as action on any other artefact. There are of course degrees of meaning, and the corpse is likely to be the most meaningful and significant inanimate element of any funerary ceremony. Nonetheless, the corpse is passive: worked over by the mourners, cleaned, painted, dressed, adorned with jewellery, carried around and deposited. None of this should go to deny the lingering humanity felt so keenly by the bereaved, which so many of their actions on the corpse are intended to bring out and emphasise: the only point is that the corpse is used and invested with meaning just as any other cultural artefact, and can take no action of its own accord.

Single-use tombs are relatively rare in the material included in this survey. Any theory of material culture must therefore take into account not only material brought into a tomb for the purpose of burial or other activity (ancestor cult as defined above) but also the rôle of material culture that is already present in the tomb. This material requires multiple interpretation, since not only does it have primary meanings as deposited in a specific ritual, and is an obvious referent to that ritual (or past rituals in general), but it also develops later meanings as it is brought into subsequent openings and uses of the tomb. In respect of bones and associated artefacts, one of the most frequent complaints against the Mycenaeans is that they would disrespectfully 'sweep aside' the remains of past burials in their zeal to lay down their dead. As far as inadequate reporting allows, this 'sweeping aside' ought to be open to analysis in the light of the theories I am outlining here.

Another methodological difficulty for this study is that interpretation is necessarily a complex process when a tomb is reused, perhaps repeatedly over several generations. In these cases, the most useful information will refer to the end of the tomb's life-cycle, which is often outside the chronological boundary of this study. Nonetheless there is often sufficient detail to reconstruct some of the details of the distant past.

The life-cycle of the mortuary locale

Few of the graves in this study could be described as single-instance interments not associated with other interments; the majority are found in cemetery locales, within multiple use tombs, or both. Where a tomb or cemetery locale has been used and reused over a period of time (its life-cycle), a key research aim is to understand how the locale is maintained in the reproduction and development of social structures, how practices are maintained and become traditional, and the place of landscape, architecture, material culture and knowledge in this question.

The place of the mortuary locale in the landscape is not given; it needs to be maintained. In the modern west this might be done through such strategies as marking off the area of the cemetery with a fence or wall, signalling its existence in written language on signs, building a mortuary chapel on the site, and using headstones above individual graves that have a dual purpose: individually, they presence a named dead person in the minds of those reading the stone, and mark off that small part of the cemetery for that person; communally, they presence the mass of the dead in the locale. In neolithic southern Britain some of the dead were placed in massive earthen mounds (barrows) that were widely visible and through their mass imposed their presence in the otherwise 'natural' landscape.

Yet these are only visible and perceptible features of the mortuary locale. There might equally be no visible sign of a burial place, yet such a place is maintained in use for generations. Moreover, without knowledge the visible mortuary monument is little more than an alien artefact. The maintenance of the mortuary locale is dependent on practice and the communication of knowledge. Memory and story-telling are particularly important where there is little perceptible to keep past events and meanings in mind: this especially applies where the mortuary locale is remote or where it is completely covered over or filled in after use.

Where the mortuary locale is placed close to or within everyday life paths, it assumes a dual locality. One meaning is routine: how to go into or near (or indeed avoid) the place in everyday activity; this may or may not involve explicit reference to its mortuary character (Is one allowed

near the place? must one take a specific path? must one carry out an act of acknowledgement on the way?) At the time of a funeral or other mortuary ritual, the funerary meaning of the place must be rediscovered and recreated. This may involve a special route to the place, procession, opening up of tombs, acts of appeasement to the ancestors, and so on: all parts of the performance. Whatever the tensions between individuals or differences over how to go about the business of the funeral, the overall performance will tend to maintain and recreate the mortuary locale. In many cases the separateness of the mortuary locale from the everyday will be emphasised by a movement to the locale. In a funeral this will involve the carrying of the corpse and will almost inevitably take on the appearance of a procession.

The performance of the funeral then requires both physical and mental movement from the everyday to the extraordinary. During the physical act of going to the grave, the minds of those involved become focused on their knowledge of mortuary custom. In thinking of the funeral those involved recover from their minds memories of past funerals and their rôles in them, and perhaps also stories from other funerals they have heard about. The funerary performance may even include a more or less ritualised recounting of stories from the (mythological) past.

Hence the maintenance of the funerary locale in the landscape is dependent on a number of factors, first among which is the dissemination of knowledge, and second is the occasional practice of going to the locale for funerary or mortuary purposes. A third factor may be the maintenance of the locale as a feature of the local topography.

The funerary locale is maintained therefore in knowledge and *praxis*; the nature of this practice need also be maintained. Locale, architecture and material culture are the media through which tradition is maintained. Each of these three elements can be seen to facilitate the reproduction of funerary practice. The procession to and reuse of locale ensures continuity in how the landscape is understood during the period of the funeral.

Funerary architecture also facilitates the reproduction of funerary practice. As we have seen that architecture affects the freedom of movement of the human frame, the numbers of people that may convene within, and how people may move from one area to another, so that architecture retains these characteristics at each funerary performance, thus making it seem natural that the way space is occupied should follow a traditional form. Where new tombs are constructed to an existing architectural pattern, this facilitates the reproduction of familiar practices in new places.

Finally the material culture used at these times similarly facilitates the reproduction of funerary practice. Where a tomb is opened for reuse, the artefacts that formed a part of prior practice will often be found once more in the tomb, witness to what had gone before and brought back into the minds of those that had witnessed previous events; different types of artefact might be associated in knowledge with specific acts. The effectiveness of the performance under way might seem to be reinforced by its conformance with tradition, and the use of the same artefacts, or of new artefacts in the same practices, might seem to enhance that conformance with tradition. The continual opening and reopening of tombs, to be confronted with the way that things were done before as evidenced by corporeal and material remains, in the process of carrying out an act that clearly aimed to conform to tradition (for otherwise new tombs and new practices would be evident), would lead to a widespread reproduction of practices through the media of repeatedly recovered artefacts.

The direct knowledge, the strength of tradition, may well be variable. Where a cemetery is used by the same group of people for all of its dead, knowledge of funerary practice would be widespread in the group and strongly reproduced through time. However, this is not the only possible mode of reproduction. Some cemeteries or locales may be only occasionally used, or may be shared with other groups, and so knowledge and tradition might be weaker, or more open to innovation. In these cases tradition might be more openly controversial and a subject for dissent. In other cases tombs may be used by groups with no direct knowledge of past practice at the tomb or cemetery. The impact of locale, architecture and material culture on these groups is different, and should be recoverable in analysis.

Performance

The verb 'perform' sums up a number of aspects of how one can think of people behaving in the mortuary locale[5]. To 'perform' originally included the idea of perfecting or closing an action, and, aside from its theatrical reference, it also means 'to carry through to completion', implying some sort of consensus of what the act ought to be; in other words, performance is action carried out, if not to a fixed script, at least so as to fulfil certain conditions.

[5] See also Boyd 1994 for some of this material.

Performance implies rôle, a word not far removed from status. I have been arguing that status or rôle is never a fixed attribute of a person, but is rather recreated in every act. Rôle, in reference to performance at the mortuary locale, is something that is created out of the performance, rather than presupposing it. This is because no two performances are the same given the differing circumstances that must prevail on each occasion. Each actor comes to the performance with a number of expectations, and the interplay between expectations and motivations brings the performance into existence through interaction. Even where people expect to fulfil identified rôles, such as priest or shaman, the differing circumstances on each occasion provide for different overall performances.

Some funerals take place under exceptional circumstances. Most obvious, as ever, might be a burial in one of the Mycenae shaft graves. The large number of artefacts deposited, along with their perceived value, suggests very strongly that rôles in that funerary performance were very much a source of tension: rôles not necessarily in evidence in simpler graves are almost mandatory (who to carry all the pottery, for example? and how was it used? who was given wine to drink by whom?)

Performance is a particularly apposite word where some element of ritual is involved. Ritualised action, particularly in the mortuary sphere, implies action that conforms more or less to some sort of known code (Barrett 1994b, 81). Certain types of behaviour are prescribed or expected; this is the (often very loose) plot of the performance. In the kinds of societies under study, elements of improvisation in performances will have been numerous and important, since one ought not assume that some sort of universal structure dominated such acts as burial. Recurrent and unique features in the archaeological evidence may reveal both widely diffused aspects of the ritual and individual variations in performance.

In Giddens' terms, 'performance' is part of discursive consciousness: action that is provocative, daring, unusual, demanding of interpretation: as action produced and monitored in discursive consciousness. Richard Schechner seems to be getting at this when he says, 'And what is performance? Behavior heightened, if ever so slightly, and publicly displayed; twice-behaved behavior' (1993, 1). Performance is action carried out in the awareness of the gaze of others. Performers and audience (the distinction may be blurred and transient in the mortuary arena) are engaged in a mental struggle to understand the actions of their fellow performers and to situate themselves meaningfully in this flow of conduct: a mental struggle that is largely absent in the routinised flow of life.

The mortuary locale, as we have seen, is brought into meaningful existence through action and its interpretation. The performance must seek to rediscover meaning and reinvest the site with those meanings, de-emphasising the associations of the daily locale, creating the performance locale. In the cemetery, much of this is achieved by the physical alteration of the setting as tombs are opened or reopened.

Expectations in relation to ritual or performance are in great part based on what has gone before. Performances in the long term can be institutionalised: as people gather to rework their memories of past performance, this reproduction of knowledge through the performance, conforming to or confounding experience and expectation, gives their practice an institutional façade.

Performance is improvised around resources the actors can draw on: architecture, knowledge, artefacts and bones in the tombs. This reflexive and intuitive renegotiation - structuration - through the material structure of architecture and locale and the dangerous, dynamic practice of the performance can be characterised by the label *liturgics*. 'Liturgy' has come to mean the practice of Church ritual, defined by sacred texts and not open to innovation. A broader meaning of 'liturgics' could allow for innovative performances of rituals that are not codified in textual form. The Greek root in 'λειτουργία' means 'public work' and came to signify public works for the gods, especially in the temples. An archaeology of liturgics would examine the ritual structures created and reproduced in the active manipulation of constraining and enabling architectural and material culture resources; not only how people emphasised certain features that became stereotypical and a core part of the liturgy, but also the possibility of experimentation and the variant ideas worked through at individual performances by those empowered to rake through the scenes and acts, sets and props of past and present performance, in memory, architecture and material culture.

Chapter Four

The analytical framework

Introduction

> We must confront the full diversity of our data. This is only possible with the aid of a theoretically competent framework designed to expose the *nature of specific practices*.
>
> Barrett 1988b, 32: emphasis added.

Chapter three set out the basic principles of a theory of human action with emphasis on its application to the study of funerary practices. This chapter outlines a specific framework for this analysis. The first section considers the sources employed - published reports - and the problems to be overcome in their interpretation. The aim is to understand both the intellectual circumstances under which excavation has been carried out, and how those circumstances affect attempts at reinterpretation. The second section sets forth an analytical methodology appropriate to the evidence in order to come to an understanding of human action in the past, on the basis of theorisation in the previous chapter.

Reading excavation reports

Before excavation, the possibilities for interpretation are endless. Most excavators would accept that a primary goal of excavation is to narrow the field of those interpretative possibilities, and to create a climate in which it is possible to make statements about a site in the past. While this is uncontroversial in itself, the archaeological practice that goes with it ought to be a matter for debate. In particular, there is usually an expectation of what sorts of statements one intends to be able to make. If excavation becomes a process tailored toward answering such specific

questions, those who later seek to ask different questions of the published record may find the publication inadequate to answer their questions. This is an inevitable concomitant of the reality of fieldwork and interpretation as contemporary social practices.

A sense that archaeological practice is uncontroversial, that it is a straightforward process that does not need theorising, is fairly ubiquitous in most of the publications examined in the course of researching this thesis. One notable exception attempted to explicitly theorise an excavation (Rapp *et alii* 1978); otherwise, excavation methodology is rarely described or explained. This is important because, if we accept that as archaeologists we are interested in narrowing the interpretative possibilities of a site through excavation, we should be concerned about the theory and practice of how we do that. Instead, excavation reports often present a series of 'discoveries', of *things* found during the excavation, apparent facts such as the form of a building or the nature of a clay idol, presented as intact, complete and 'perfect' (in the sense of 'closed') discoveries that are obvious and uncontroversial. The supporting evidence, the stratigraphy, plans, sections, drawings, contextual associations and contextual descriptions, may neither be reported nor in most cases recorded.

In comparison to the area excavation of complex settlement deposits, the excavation of a tomb ought to be a relatively simple affair. Except in those cases where the tombs are located within settlement or other context, the tomb itself forms a relatively closed context, often dug into otherwise non-archaeological soil. It might be part of a cemetery, in which case the spatial and chronological relationships between tombs is important; the cemetery might include other features, such as paths or markers such as *stelai*. Nevertheless, the tomb itself ought to represent, in most cases, a relatively simple exercise in excavation.

Time and again, basic information is not presented in reports. The stratigraphy of the tomb is described in the simplest manner, or not described at all, and rarely illustrated. Finds may well often be described but their exact findspots left vague or not mentioned. Although the majority of excavation reports used for this catalogue are nominally provisional in nature, it is clear in many cases that any putative final publication could not have included this sort of information because it was never recorded during the excavation.

In attempting to use the sum of information presented by such a body of excavation reports, one therefore has to come to an understanding of the circumstances in which excavators felt themselves to be working. Although past excavation records are here criticised as inadequate, the fact of the existence of some sort of publication in an academic journal suggests that these

excavators felt themselves to be working at least adequately within an academic paradigm and that their excavations were worthy of publication and scrutiny by a wider audience. The task that faces us therefore is to come to some sort of understanding of the paradigm within which reports were produced in order to assess both the validity of the data in those reports and also how much data might be missing from those reports.

John Barrett makes this point in a discussion of the possibilities of reinterpreting excavation reports (1987). He points out, quoting Alcock, that reinterpretation of a site report based on that report alone is impossible, 'because it is impossible to know either what the excavator failed to observe, or the excavator's general competence in the tasks of excavation and recording' (Barrett 1987, 410). Reinterpretation flows instead from two sources. The first is an examination of the internal logic of the report, attempting to evaluate the author's assumptions, the record of the excavation as published, and any explicit interpretation of that record. The interpretation can be seen to be a result of a meshing of the author's assumptions with the record of the excavation. This level of reinterpretation can only, however, demonstrate doubts about the excavator's interpretation of her material. It cannot lead to new interpretations. This comes only, and partially, from the second source alluded to above: an attempt to fit the excavation into a broader interpretation. In his article Barrett shows that the original reports on the Glastonbury lake village are open to considerable doubt, but that reinterpretation flows mainly from a reconsideration of those reports in the light of more recent excavations at related sites nearby.

I have followed this reasoning, where possible, in my discussion of sites in this thesis. In some cases it has proved possible to offer specific reinterpretations of sites, but these are always provisional in that they are unchecked by new excavation. Some general comment on the contexts in which earlier workers produced their reports is necessary here.

Since we have already established that excavators in all probability felt comfortable with the publications they were producing[1], which in so many cases show that contextual information was regarded as superfluous, we should be able to establish what sorts of information these reports were instead providing, and why that was regarded as essential information for

[1] This may not be the case with rescue excavations, but I would argue that while rescue reports can be even more abbreviated than the preliminary reports of research excavations, an examination of the research and rescue reports of the 1950s to 1970s would reveal little difference in what sorts of aspects of an excavation might be reported.

presentation in a preliminary report. I propose that two factors formed an important part of the context within which people worked. The first concerns the nature of *what* was being investigated: a general and basic but vague and undefined consensus about the nature of Mycenaean society - heroic, in some ways Homeric[2], certainly aristocratic and rigidly hierarchical (middle helladic society concomitantly backward and primitive). The second concerns *how* one should carry out an investigation: the methodological primacy of classification, identification and typology. These two strands inform the vast majority of pre-1960s writing and much written after that, and the primacy of typology remains with us today.

As an example of these factors we might consider S. N. Marinátos' work at *10:Gouvalári* in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Marinátos noted up to eight burial mounds, of which he investigated three. One was found to contain two mid-sized tholos tombs, another contained three small tholos tombs, and the third was not intensively investigated. The two 'royal' tholos tombs received far more coverage (five pages over several reports) than the mound with three smaller tholoi: this was dismissed in half a paragraph. The coverage in print reflects the intensity of excavation, so that Marinátos returned to the 'royal' tombs several times, sieving the earth lest he missed important artefacts. The description that Marinátos gives to the mound with the three small tholoi is instructive as to his attitude to this archaeology:

> Another mound, number 2, showed that it concealed three small tholos tombs, whose diameters did not surpass three metres. They are rough and artless constructions, without entrances, the dead buried either from above or through an opening in the rough walling of the chamber. None of the three tombs held a skeleton or even a skull so that it seems that the other bones, which - broken and incomplete - lay here and there, probably came from the removal of remains elsewhere where they were broken. The most interesting of the three tombs was the first (the western), which had in its north part a flat stone standing upright on its flat edge and on it small circular rocks (plate 146β), which however covered nothing. The finds were a thin knife and other bits of bronze, a bronze pin length 10.2cm bearing on its head an opening (without ring), an arrowhead of yellow stone, bits of spindles and bits of handmade pottery, mostly from tomb 1, whose diameter is 2.75m and its highest remaining height 1.15m.
>
> Marinátos 1959, 175.Translation: author.

Marinátos here describes the excavation of a mound containing three small built tombs that appear at least to be similar to tholos tombs. While the excavation of the two 'royal' tholoi would have occupied more effort simply in terms of volume, the ratio would not be as great as is implied by five pages to one paragraph. Besides, any archaeological reader can quickly point

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[2] Mycenaean beliefs in relation to death are regarded as essentially Homeric by Mylonas (1948), despite the obvious differences; Andronikos (1968) places most of the customs described in Homer in the protogeometric and geometric periods.

out basic information missing from the quotation above. What were the dimensions of mound 2? Where were the tholoi, horizontally and vertically? What were their dimensions? What was the construction technique? What contexts were excavated within the tholoi? What were the associations of the finds? What types of pottery were present?

Beyond such basic questions, some guiding principles in Marinátos' work are obvious. Selection in what to report (and what to record) has clearly taken place. Marinátos' description gives some clues as to how that selection took place. The tholoi are introduced as being 'rough and artless constructions': so, in some system of judgement that is not made explicit, they are *not as good as* some other standard (presumably 'royal tholos tombs'). For Marinátos, tombs such as these are *not as important* as others. It is acceptable to him that his recording of these tombs is cursory, and we must assume that he felt his intended audience would accept that judgement.

As well as architectural inferiority, the burials represented in those tombs are also of little interest because the apparent mode of burial also belongs to an inferior class. Rather than there being intact inhumations, the remains inside the tombs are of disarticulated skeletons, perhaps mixed with artefacts. Time and again in his work Marinátos gives recording and reporting precedence to intact inhumations associated with artefacts. As his many reports make clear, he regards the disarticulation of bones and mixing of artefacts as an activity that is *not as interesting* as inhumation; in fact, more than not interesting, it is an act of vandalism against his pristine burial context. Those in the past who might have entered the tomb and interfered in some way with the remains are almost always called robbers, and no attempt is made to distinguish qualitatively between a 'robbery' during the prehistoric period and a robbery in modern times.

I suggest therefore that in facing the reports of Marinátos and others working in that time and *milieu*, we have to face a distinct recording and reporting preference for articulated burials, associated with 'rich' or numerous items, in large tombs. The recently excavated site at *52:Pellána* still exhibits these preferences: of four excavated tombs, description centres on the large and impressive one, and two are not described at all. Further examples (other than Marinátos' excavations) are *54:Vafió*, excavated by Tsoúndas and published in far greater detail than the nearby tomb at *34:Kámbos*, also excavated by Tsoúndas, even allowing for the difference in numbers of finds; the seven tholoi at *51:Análipsis*, of which only the large one is described in any detail, the smaller ones being dismissed as uninteresting; the chamber tombs of *58:Epídhavros Limirá*.

Returning to the example of Marinátos' excavations at *10:Gouvalári*, both the two larger tholoi and the three smaller tholoi are in this thesis regarded as belonging to a broad context of early Mycenaean tholos tombs, variable in architecture but forming part of phenomena open to interpretation (as will be demonstrated in succeeding chapters). The burial practices represented in both mounds are also given consideration. In an interpretative strategy that emphasises evidence that has effectively been suppressed in the original publication, the main recourse, as suggested above, is to an understanding of the conditions under which the evidence was produced, and a study of more recent and better reported evidence.

In many excavation reports the underlying logic is of hierarchical taxonomy. Every aspect of the material evidence can be classified and held up as an example of a type (or sometimes as a unique circumstance). Taxonomy permeates every aspect of the excavation report, whether it is the categorisation of pottery or other finds, of kinds of burial, of classes of behaviour evidenced in the finds, or architectural typology. In this interpretative scheme, the importance and meaning of a pot are not so much in its stratigraphic context, as its classification. Pottery that is readily classified is much more likely to be reported than difficult to classify, unpainted coarseware; whole or restored pots are more likely to be reported than sherds. Tomb architecture is also to be classified, and these classifications bear directly on how well the architecture is recorded. Larger tholoi are recorded in greater detail than smaller tholoi; cist graves and chamber tombs might be cursorily described. This approach to the material is facilitated by a classification system that first separates these classes of monument and then sets one above the other.

Even in modern and well published excavations, the primacy of typology is apparent. The bronze age occupation of Nihória was published just a few years ago (McDonald & Wilkie 1992); for the middle helladic period, 27 pages are devoted to stratigraphy, plans, sections and architectural descriptions; 162 pages are devoted to the description (81 pages) and illustration (81 pages) of the pottery; there is a similar pattern for the late helladic period, though with proportionally less description of pottery. Moreover, the excavation technique used, even though the site is an extensive settlement rather than simply a number of funerary contexts, is that of discrete trenches excavated to depth and separated by baulks, rather than open area excavation with single context recording (Rapp *et alii* 1978, 8-9). In essence this technique is unchanged from that employed by Blegen at Korákou in the 1910s (the excavation method is not made explicit in the report, Blegen 1921, but see the report on *Prosymna* for a brief description: Blegen 1937, 8) or Caskey at Lerna in the 1950s (for example, Caskey 1954: 4-5

and figure 1), and in each case the primary aim of excavation is made clear in the reports: the establishment of a reliable stratigraphic sequence of pottery styles for typological purposes.

Overall, therefore, although in a sample of 61 sites we are dealing with many excavators working at different times and in different intellectual *milieux*, we can establish some basic principles that apply to most of the sites:

- the primary interpretative goal is typology, whether of architecture, burial, or artefact;
- often (but not always) there is a clear bias toward those members of each class regarded as somehow *better*.

The work of G. S. Korrés in Messinía in the 1970s and 1980s has gone some way to correct these biases. His work has been primarily concerned with checking and testing Marinátos' earlier excavations, with an eventual view to a full publication of his work (Marinátos made no serious start on final publication). Although Korrés' work is not yet finally published, his preliminary reports are richly detailed, and form the basis of some of the longer descriptions in the catalogue entries in this work. Korrés has devoted much effort to areas neglected by Marinátos, particularly less monumental burial types.

The goals of this thesis are, first to identify instances of human practice in the mass of evidence from the past, and second to weave this infinite variety of activity into a historical understanding. For the first of these goals, typological studies are less pertinent than detailed contextual descriptions of tomb deposits. It should be clear that any conclusions advanced in the following chapters are based on a reinterpretation of a body of evidence that was not collected with this goal in mind; my conclusions should therefore be open to question in the context of new field work. Nevertheless, the evidence at hand is not completely inadequate for a study of this type. No description of past activity could ever be complete, as is even clear in cases of direct observation in anthropology; I therefore in each case seek to make statements that can be supported by the evidence that is available. These statements can never be complete descriptions of past activity, but rather suggest the possibilities for action in the past based on the available contextual evidence of architecture, burial and artefactual remains. The depth of the interpretation depends largely on the degree to which the evidence is recorded.

In the context of individual observations and historical outlines suggested in the following chapters, I believe that future excavation projects that record detailed contextual information will serve to bring richer detail to the outline already in place.

The first section of this chapter dealt with the problems associated with the interpretation of published archives; this section devises a methodology whereby one may make definite statements about mortuary practice on the basis of the kinds of evidence available to us. The central problem in devising a methodology for the analysis of mortuary behaviour lies in relating the archaeological record, evidence excavated, surveyed and reported, to ideas about how people acted in the past. The link is not direct, but is formed through a chain of interpretation: I, as author of this thesis, interpret the archaeological record, which in itself consists of a written summary of the numerous observations and interpretations of previous workers; those observations and interpretations have no direct access to the past, but constitute a partial and subjective record of the material evidence of past human activity; and this material evidence is not in itself a direct witness to truth, but is merely the detritus of past action, articulated through such media and imbued with multiple and constantly shifting meaning.

The method employed is to distinguish generic fields of practice related to the mortuary arena, and to analyse the record for evidence to identify such types of practice and allow for a more definite understanding of how those practices were carried out. Mortuary behaviour is very amenable to this method, since it tends to consist of certain unavoidable acts (the ultimate disposal of the corpse, for example, is unavoidable) as well as perhaps other acts not strictly *functionally* necessary to the performance of a funeral (examples of which might be ancestor rituals, or modifications of the corpse). Merely identifying these general practices can be straightforward, but the aim is to interpret under what circumstances such acts may have been carried out. For the purposes of this analysis mortuary behaviour has been divided into four separate 'acts', each with its own time frame and scene. This artificial division is essential in order to analyse separately such activities as inhumation and grave construction, which might not be immediately related. Within each act, certain generic fields of practice have been identified for consideration. In this way the method of analysis allows interpretation to proceed from an idea of the spectrum of possible actions to a specific interpretation of human action through time at any given funerary site, based on available evidence. The four acts of mortuary practice are

- The location of cemetery, tomb and grave;
- Construction and modification;
- Acts outside the grave;
- Acts at and within the grave.

The broad distinction drawn between these four headings is not ideologically driven, but is methodologically useful. The construction of a tomb, for example, may be separated from any given act of interment by hundreds of years: the construction of the tomb would therefore be unconnected with the burial. Acts away from the grave may be separated in time from acts at the grave; and the latter can include 'ancestor rites' or other interventions in the grave when no funeral is being undertaken. In the complex nexus of actions and actors that is the funerary performance, some or all of these acts might be closely linked, which will become clear through interpretation.

The fields of practice that might be evident under these headings, and hence the analytical framework, are given in the table below:

Location of tomb, cemetery and grave	Acts outside the grave
Locating the grave Procession and gathering	Preparation of materials Preparation of the corpse Other acts outside the grave
Construction and modification	**Acts at and within the grave**
Preparation of construction materials Other acts before beginning Digging or building the grave Acts at the end of the construction phase Opening the grave Closing the grave	Movement Engagement with the material past Acts involving materials brought to the grave Deposition of material and corpse

Table 4.1. Mortuary practice.

This interpretative scheme is non-linear; it is not proposed that actions be identified proceeding from one category to the next until a complete picture is obtained. Rather, I have identified as many general types of activity as might be evidenced in actions associated with death, burial and tomb use; the evidence at any given site will be partial and reflect only some of these acts. The sub-divisions under each heading are not necessarily sequential; for example, the last two types of activity under 'Construction and modification' would normally occur before and after rites of interment[3].

Before considering the analytical framework in detail, I want briefly to consider the nature of interpretation itself. In the 'chain of interpretation', mentioned above, relating statements about

[3] Certain important practices that are not evidenced in the material under study, such as excarnation away from the tomb, or cremation, would require small modifications of the scheme.

the past with the past itself, interpretation links each stage of the chain. Interpretation itself is an ill-defined process. This is of interest not only in how interpretation leads to statements about the past in this thesis and in archaeological work generally, but also because all understanding and ultimately all knowledge of how to go on, as employed by those in the past who are the object of study as well as by ourselves, depend on processes of interpretation.

Interpretation is a mental process through which contentions between knowledge (the comprehended world) and circumstances (perceptions or new knowledge that cannot immediately be reconciled with knowledge) are resolved by creating new knowledge (the interpretation). Interpretation is therefore not a statement of the obvious (Tilley 1994) and is personal and subjective (Shanks & Tilley 1992, chapter 5). In Giddens' terms (chapter three), it is clearly produced in discursive consciousness.

Interpretation in archaeology is the production of 'knowledge' of the past through study of the 'archaeological record' (either directly through excavation or autopsy, or through secondary interpretation of the written record). The past itself, and any 'complete' archaeological record, cannot be known; hence interpretation in archaeology is always contentious and open to challenge or revision in the light of new evidence. Archaeological interpretation is cyclical in nature: ideas about the past influence work carried out, which in turn influences ideas about the past, and so on.

Archaeological interpretation is double, in that the process of interpretation consists of working through both the archaeological record and ideas of how the past may have been, and the interpretation of each of these depends on the other (Barrett 1990a, 34-35, summarised in the following schema):

ideas about past practice ←→ interpretation ←→ the 'archaeological record'

'Past practice' no longer exists, but one can through interpretation suggest ideas about how the past may have been; the 'archaeological record' cannot be known in its entirety, and even understanding a part of it requires interpretation. Archaeological interpretation is therefore a composite formed of a continuous discourse between ideas about the past and ideas about the archaeological record. As Barrett points out, interpretation is cyclical, so that each new insight on one side prompts reconsideration on the other.

The methodological framework for producing an understanding of the past is therefore, on the right side, representing the archaeological record, my interpretation of that record as presented in appendix one; on the left side, ideas about past practice as set out in 'neutral' form in this chapter (the possibilities of action in the mortuary sphere). The interpretation of the archaeological record, ideas about past practice, and the interpretative interface between the two, form the basis for discussion in the succeeding chapters:

Ideas about past practice	*Interpretation*	*The 'archaeological record'*
theory of human action (chapter 3) analytical framework (chapter 4)	chapters 5-9	chapter 1 site catalogue (appendix 1)

Table 4.2. Interpretation in this thesis.

The rest of this chapter offers specific consideration of the acts and fields of mortuary behaviour as set out in table 4.1.

Location of tomb, cemetery and grave

These categories of action can be said to realise and define the place of the cemetery, tomb and grave in the landscape: physical movement and mental acts of location define the grave topographically.

Locating the grave. Location implies two slightly different processes: it can be the act of placing a grave within the landscape, of finding an appropriate place for it in the topographic nexus; where a grave is reused, it implies finding and choosing again that grave. Hence 'location' involves both making place and finding place.

The location of a burial in the landscape involves a hierarchy of topographic decision making. Even 'simple' graves, such as single use pit burials, are located in a complex manner with respect to topography, and may be found in relationship with other burials and with habitation areas. For the more complex circumstances of burial found at sites in this study, up to five tiers might exist in a hierarchy of location:

- location of cemetery within landscape
- location of burial monument within cemetery
- location of burial place within burial monument
- location of grave within burial place
- location of burial within grave

'Cemetery' is defined in the second edition of the Oxford English Dictionary as 'A place, usually a ground, set apart for the burial of the dead', or 'a large public park or ground laid out expressly for the interment of the dead' (Simpson & Weiner 1991, 1027). This definition is applicable to some of the sites considered in this thesis, but in the case of many burial monuments, we have to deal with a nexus of relatively widely spaced funerary monuments, a nexus itself enmeshed in a routinely traversed and inhabited landscape: *not* a place expressly set aside for burial. In other words, although in some cases a burial ground set apart from everyday life can be identified, in other cases burial monuments, often clearly related one to the other, are to be found set amid the locales of everyday life.

Therefore the location hierarchy noted above should be modified and made more complex. We must understand relationships between the nexus of funerary monuments and its elements, between the wider cultural landscape and its elements, and all of the cross-relationships between them. Because all that we observe is the detritus of the past, and we never have a complete knowledge of any artefact or monument (nor did anyone else in the past), these are not simple relationships between *things*: there is no empirical relationship between any of the elements of the cultural landscape that may be observed and written down. Such relationships are fundamentally perceptual and therefore contingent on the observer. An analysis of the archaeological landscape should therefore encompass possibilities of how people might have situated themselves within a conceptual topography of funerary monument, settlement and pathway.

A static first attempt at presenting the possibilities of these conceptual relationships is presented in figure 4.1 below:

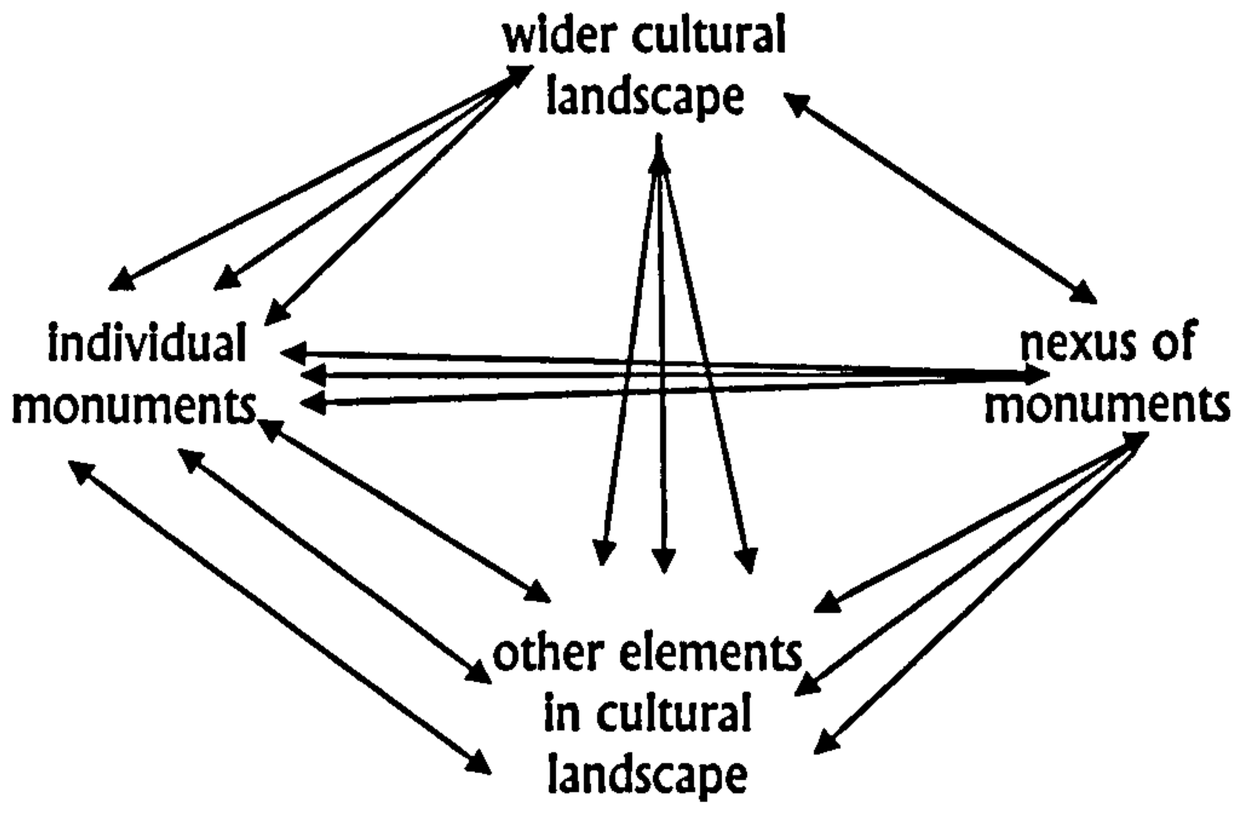

Figure 4.1. Landscape and funerary monuments. The diagram presents two conceptual totalities, the 'wider cultural landscape' and the 'nexus of monuments', and two collectives for individual elements, 'individual monuments' and 'other elements in cultural landscape'. The arrows indicate the inter-relationships of these nodes, multiple arrows indicating the both the collective and individual nature of the items to the bottom and the left. The diagram simplifies the possibly highly hierarchical nature of these inter-relationships. All relationships are conceptual: dependent on the observer and open to constant reinterpretation.

This is not a model or reconstruction of any actually existing past situation. Instead, it is a guide to the interpretation of evidence. It is a representation of how a past observer might understand the topography of monuments at any given time (although time itself is missing from the equation). The relationships indicated in the diagram are the bases on which a knowledge of topography is built. The relationships are known through the interpretation of past events and the interpretation of stories and statements given by others. Fundamental aspects of this knowledge may include the experience of traversing the landscape, alone or with others, and thus building an understanding of locales and pathways; taking part in or observing activities at or near such locales; and the interpretation of stories of the past involving these locales (chapter three). This knowledge is personal and contingent (so it differs from person to person and is open to continuous revision).

The simplified diagram of figure 4.1 attempts to present an immensely complex range of possibilities in a simple model. Any overall nexus of monuments would not be made up of a series of simple relationships as indicated: in reality, different monuments might be understood to have important inter-relationships forming multiple sub-nexus which again might be inter-related. The same is true for the other elements of the cultural landscape. In reality, such a static picture is in any case untenable, since the agent would consider only certain aspects at any time, and events and circumstances would cause continuous modification of the details of the relationships.

The process of choosing an appropriate burial place would often involve a number of people. These might include any of the following: persons making kin, social, institutional or group relationship claims on the dead; persons acting in social rôles associated with death or burial; and persons claiming control over the landscape, a monument, or an individual grave. The last category might include those claiming to be inheritors of rights from previous dead. The location of the burial and many other aspects of the funeral will be the result of discussion, consultation or negotiation between such people. In some cases much of that discussion will be ruled by tradition, and many aspects of the funeral, including location, might seem largely 'given'; this however need not be the case.

These considerations apply to the location of burials within the landscape, within cemeteries and within monuments. In the latter case discussion will revolve around differing understandings of the monument: not only its place in the landscape, but understandings of its micro-topography: perhaps conceptual relationships between already existing graves (and their apparent occupants), or other features of the monument. The process of negotiation might be completed before the funeral begins, or might be ongoing, so that the very act of choosing a location is part of the procession, the act of choosing a place within a monument might be part of the funeral ceremony, and depend on conditions found to exist only after the monument is opened.

Reuse of a grave is occasionally suggested to be fortuitous. If fact there may be different degrees of relationship between burials. A grave may be knowledgeably reused; a grave may be reused whose significance has been forgotten but nonetheless is located in a known cemetery; or occasionally even the significance of the cemetery may have been forgotten. In many cases of monument reuse after a long period of disuse, it seems likely that while knowledge of the first users of the tomb may be lost, the traditional nature of the burial monument places it in a widely understood context and imbues the remains within with ancestral significance.

Such then are the considerations involved in burial in a monumental landscape. At first it may seem archaeologically intangible, and so it is, but the existence of monuments, funerary landscapes and burials such as we have to deal with in this thesis *in itself confirms* that these considerations and situations did exist and were worked through. The question to be resolved in this study is how far these actions can be identified and understood from the evidence (chapter five).

Procession and gathering. This activity in most cases should be closely associated with the previous category, since the location of the grave is made manifest in the co-ordinated

movement of the mourners toward it, and their gathering around or in it. Although the acts of procession and gathering might seem to leave no trace in the archaeological record, at some point in the funerary process the corpse must be taken to the graveside. In the case of adults it is unlikely that just one person would undertake this task: some sort of processional movement is almost required. For children, it is possible that this phase be relatively unimportant, the corpse being carried to the grave by one person; a procession of people is however just as possible.

These acts are potentially extremely important parts of the funerary ritual. Given that preparations have been made for burial, this is the moment where the dead is taken from the habitually lived areas of the community to an area specifically prepared for a dead person, and in a very clear way signals the changes that have taken place. Hence this act is likely to be highly charged: perhaps a deeply emotional moment, where the mourners consider their relationship to the newly-dead and articulate that through their actions in respect of the corpse; and where they begin to rethink their relationships among themselves. For those claiming or feeling some relationship to the dead, this moment is an extremely public opportunity to articulate that relationship, through action on or with the corpse. Such considerations spill over into the acts at the graveside.

An understanding of the acts of procession and gathering can come from a study of the architecture of the grave. In cases of 'simple' burials the grave is relatively small-scale and is not visible in the landscape from any distance: the mourners can be expected to make their way to the grave and gather around it. The order of movement will be dictated by the corpse, since those carrying it must be allowed direct access to the grave. In cases of more complex burial monuments, two or more phases of procession and gathering must be considered: a procession to the entrance of the monument, and then a re-ordering of the group and the entry of a smaller number of people within. These questions are given fuller consideration in chapter five.

Construction and modification

There are three related aspects to acts of construction and modification. First is construction itself, creating a grave or tomb where none was before. Modification relates to the making of architectural changes to an existing monument, and is most relevant in terms of the creation of a new grave within an existing monument, but also impinges on the third aspect: the modification of the properties of the tomb by opening and closing it.

Preparation of construction materials. For example, the quarrying and cutting of stone, and the fashioning or procurement of tools. These are evidenced by the materials themselves: cut stone bears witness both to its cutting and the tools used to cut it.

Other acts before beginning. A phase of construction might be preceded by acts, rituals or ceremonies that form part of the construction phase but either leave virtually no archaeological remains or leave remains that cannot easily be associated with construction. This category might include preparation at the spot where the dead is to be interred or a tomb is to be built, for example by foundation deposits or feasting.

Digging or building the grave. This phase, highly complex in the case of large monuments, is evidenced in the grave or tomb itself. Study of architectural remains allows for such questions as how the grave or tomb was built, whether specialist skills involved, and how many people might have been involved.

Grave digging and tomb building may be a highly organised and structured process. In western societies, for example, grave digging is often carried out by paid workers who dig graves regularly and are connected to the dead and the mourners only by a wage-labour obligation, usually negotiated by a third party such as a town council. In the prehistoric period one is more accustomed to imagine that grave digging was an *ad hoc* activity organised by mourners separately in connection with each funerary event. Nevertheless the following chapters suggest that some tomb building activities at least might have involved specific corporate groups. Grave digging might on occasion have been organised under social precepts of which we are unaware.

Acts at the end of the construction phase. As with acts before beginning, ceremony or ritual marking the end of the construction phase may well take place, but may leave no archaeological trace, or no remains obviously connected with construction. Again feasting or foundation deposits may play a part.

Opening the grave. The last two categories of action may be entirely unrelated to the original construction of a grave or tomb, but since they require direct intervention in the architecture of the grave or tomb, they are properly considered here.

There are two aspects in the interpretation of the opening of a grave or tomb. The first is one of effort: in some cases minimal, in the most extreme of cases requiring the labour of a large number of people. The second is symbolic, and likely to be charged with significance: before a

grave or tomb is opened, its form is everyday, mundane and safe, perhaps symbolised by the blank façade of the tomb or the low mound of earth over the grave. Opening the grave changes the circumstances of the world: one approaching must be ready to face the bones of the ancestors laid bare before her, and all the social myth, history, power and meaning that they might seem to represent. So by opening the tomb requirements in behaviour and in interpretation are changed and heightened; for those who claim or feel some connection with the tomb and the dead within, their understanding of society and their place in it will be brought into question or made explicit in relation to the tomb. It is the prelude to contact with the dead within, the liminal moment that marks the beginning of the mortuary ceremony. In the case of built graves, the entrance marks the liminal point between the grave and the outside world, mirroring the liminal rôle of the act of opening.

Closing the grave. This act mirrors the last: again liminal, it marks the end of the mortuary ceremony. The building of a wall, or the filling of a grave with earth, creates an impermeable barrier between the locale now inhabited by the dead and the world of the living. The act is evidenced in the fact of the closed grave, and other evidence may often be taken to indicate peripheral activities associated with grave closure in a non-functional manner: evidence of feasting, fires, or toasting.

Acts outside the grave

This section includes all of the actions that lead up to a funeral or other intervention in the grave. Since this activity is likely to take place away from the grave, evidence is limited, although the presence of artefacts in the grave can offer insight into the preparatory stages.

Preparation of materials. Although it is possible to carry out a funeral without the use of any special artefacts, this would seem rarely to have been the reality. Two different types of preparation are considered here: the preparation of materials to be used directly on the corpse, and the preparation of materials that will play a particular rôle in the funerary process. Where a grave is opened for non-interment purposes, both types of preparation may still have occurred: equipment may be brought for use in the grave, and some of that may be used directly on the bones of the older dead.

Although the most obvious question to ask of material found in the mortuary context is how it was used (considered below), the source of the material is also open to interpretation. Were any

of the objects made for the grave, and if not, from what contexts are they likely to have come and how was their transformation into items associated with the funeral articulated?

There are two modes by which an item might be made for the grave: it might be made in advance of need, and held until the moment of the funeral; or alternatively it might be made for the funeral of a specific person after the moment of that person's death. The second alternative is likely to apply to a few, easy-to-make objects only, as the speed of decomposition of the corpse in the Mediterranean climate is likely to have limited the period of time between death and interment.

Most items in the grave are unlikely to have been made explicitly for the grave, but are more likely to have been taken from some other context and, through incorporation in mortuary rituals and physical incorporation in the tomb, to have been transformed in meaning. The source of such objects may be difficult to ascertain, but certain hypotheses can be examined. In the case of objects adorning the corpse, were any of them associated with the dead person in life, or were they gathered from other sources? And in the case of objects used in funerary rituals, what would be likely to be their previous context and meaning? Certain objects may have embodied a duality: perhaps routinely incorporated in day to day existence, yet nonetheless understood as maintaining the possibility of taking on a new meaning in the mortuary context.

Preparation of the corpse. The corpse may be prepared for interment by direct modification of the body (cutting, painting, tattooing), dressing in clothing, adorning with jewellery and other artefacts (such as weapons), and laying out on a mode of transport such as a bier or a wagon. The archaeological evidence includes material that appears to have been part of the raiment of the corpse, and perhaps evidence for the arrangement of the corpse within the grave (for example, a contracted position may indicate trussing). In terms of how the corpse is prepared for burial, the effects of *rigor mortis* also require consideration.

There are three types of evidence to be considered in this category: whether any artefact might be the remains of an act of dressing the corpse, that is whether items that might have been worn by the corpse are preserved in the grave; whether the disposition of skeletons, where not disarticulated, gives any clue to treatment before interment; and whether any other artefact might have been used in the preparation of the corpse and then deposited within the grave or in the tomb.

The attention given to the corpse is often an important part of the procedure of mortuary customs, and offers great insight into how any given group of people might deal with death. This phase could be elaborate and prolonged, and yet leave little in the way of archaeological evidence, since much of the evidence (modification of the flesh, wearing of clothes) will not survive. Sites that are unexcavated or where excavation is barely reported can offer no information as to these questions.

Other acts outside the grave. Activities away from the grave are inherently unlikely to be evidenced in the grave context. The previous two categories differ because evidence for them is likely to be brought from elsewhere to the grave. Other aspects of the period before a funerary ceremony are difficult to recover from the archaeological evidence. Traditions such as keeping a vigil over the corpse, for example, could not be evidenced in the grave. This field of action is alluded to as a signifier of the irretrievable in the study of funerary archaeology.

Acts at and within the grave

This section involves the analysis of all the acts that can be carried out in the grave, and these activities are those most immediately evidenced by the archaeological remains found in tombs.

Movement. This section examines the effect of tomb and grave architecture on the human body, and in particular examines what kinds of individual or group activity might have been enabled or constrained by the architecture. In combination with other evidence for funerary activities, this method of analysis allows for interpretations both of how monuments were used, and how they were intended to be used.

Engagement with the material past. When a tomb or grave is reopened, whether for another burial or for some other purpose, people must come into contact with the remains of previous burial ceremonies. Often the evidence of how they did so is present in abundance during excavation, although recording is may be inadequate for detailed investigation.

The approach to and use of an existing monument is a conscious engagement with past lives and past acts. The creation and continuing use of a collective tomb evidences the desire of those involved to structure their funerary acts in such a way as to be able in a material and visible way to reference the past and the ancestors as a fundamental part of the activity.

The aim of this analysis is to understand how people engaged with the material remains of the past, what meaning they may have invested in those remains, and how that meaning in turn was reproduced in continuing activity in the grave or tomb.

It has been commonly suggested in the past that the nature of interference with the bones and objects within middle helladic and Mycenaean tombs can be characterised by words such as disrespect, carelessness, theft and pillage (to give references is superfluous, as this view is close to universal; dissenting voices include Wells 1990, Boyd 1994 and Cavanagh & Mee 1998). This point of view is impressionistic, inasmuch as the scene of chaos that awaits the excavator on opening the tomb speaks to him or her of the violation of the grave; impressionistic, inasmuch as it depends on the excavator's idea of how a grave ought to be. The 'violated' grave is always (implicitly and often explicitly) placed in comparison with the ideal, untouched grave.

Hence acts that led to the final condition of the grave as excavated are rarely closely investigated. Yet the effects of that action (broken objects, broken or disarticulated bones) can be explained ways other than those related to vandalism and theft. As noted by Cavanagh & Mee (1998, 116), it is in the nature of multiple burial monuments that their users came into contact with the remains of previous burials; indeed, it can be argued that this became an important concern. Therefore the question revolves around the motivations of those who interfered with the remains.

Different motivations can be imagined, not all of which are 'bad':

- the removal of artefacts for their 'worth' by those with no interest in or perception of the dead in the tomb;
- the removal of artefacts for their worth, where that worth is partly or wholly perceived as related to the assumed dead of the tomb;
- the removal of artefacts as part of a rite directed at the dead or other supernatural forces;
- the removal of bones for the same reason;
- the interference with or breaking of bones or artefacts as part of a rite directed at the dead or other supernatural forces;
- the interference with or breaking of bones or artefacts in direct preparation for a new interment.

The aim of the analysis of evidence under this heading is therefore to define the extent to which older burials were later interfered with, and to come to an understanding of what people felt they were doing in acting in this way.

Acts involving materials brought to the grave. Aside from the material that may already be present in the grave or tomb, most action in the grave is carried out through the media of the corpse and other artefacts brought to the tomb. Often material used in funerary ceremonies may be deposited in the tomb, allowing for a partial reconstruction of those ceremonies. In other cases, material may be used and then removed from the tomb, making the action archaeologically invisible. Where artefacts have been found with disarticulated bones it is possible that they may have been used on more than one occasion. The analysis here seeks to understand the rôle artefacts were made to play in the tomb, and how those rôles were reproduced through time.

Deposition of materials and corpse. There are three modes by which material may come to be deposited in a tomb or grave. The most direct is *deliberate deposition*: an artefact is brought into the tomb or grave context for the purpose of deposition, and thereby attains its meaning. In all funerals the corpse is the primary such artefact, and other traditions may operate through which items are deposited. The second mode is *consequential deposition*: deposition is not an intended outcome, but is consequential on some other aspect of the funeral. The most obvious example of this is any items adorning the corpse: their primary meaning relates to their rôle in adorning the corpse, and their ultimate deposition in the tomb is as a result of the deposition of the corpse. The third mode is *transformational deposition*: where certain artefacts are brought to the grave context with the primary purpose of being used in some ritual, in so being used their meaning may be transformed so that they seem to belong with that context. As an example, if a cup is chosen from a routine context to be used in a drinking ceremony in a tomb ritual, in being used its meaning may change so that the mourners associate it with the funerary context, rather than the routine. Such a transformation may result in the deposition and perhaps destruction of the object.

Since items adorning the corpse should be primarily understood in their rôle as adornment and not as items to be deposited, at the end of the funeral, if adornment were no longer percelved as appropriate, it is possible that some items might be removed from the corpse. In ancestor rituals or secondary burial ceremonies, items of adornment might be removed for the same reason, or because the transformation of the corpse from flesh into bones might seem to make their continuing presence in the tomb superfluous.

Whereas it is relatively easy to discern instances of consequential deposition in a grave context, it may be impossible to distinguish between deliberate and transformational deposition: the question hinges on the rôle of the item in the funeral. Instances of deliberate and transformational deposition will have been identified in trying to distinguish between artefacts used in funerary ceremonies and those which may have been simply deposited in the grave (*acts involving materials brought to the grave*), whereas instances of consequential deposition will have been identified in relation to the adornment of the corpse (*preparation of the corpse*). This section will examine the circumstances of deliberate and transformational deposition.

Interment is evidenced by the skeletal remains of the corpse. Where secondary actions have been carried out on the corpse, the evidence of interment is thus obscured, and in many multiple burial monuments the evidence of how early interments might have been positioned is lost. The position in which the corpse is found may also be as much a product of the preparation phase as of the interment phase. Where the corpse has been prepared by binding, for example, this may well have taken place before interment, during the preparatory phase.

The following chapters seek to provide an interpretation of the archaeological evidence in the terms given above.

Chapter Five

The mortuary locale in the landscape

Introduction

This chapter, and those that follow, discuss the evidence presented in the site catalogue (appendix one) in terms of the fields of action presented in chapter four. The chapter is divided into three broad period bands: MHI-II, MHIII-LHI, and LHI-IIB (the logic behind this division is set out in chapter one). However, because of the sparse nature of the data, and chronological inexactitude, two categories of evidence are discussed separately: 'simpler' graves, and (mostly unexcavated) burial mounds generally regarded as being of MH date. These monuments are listed respectively in tables 1.2 (chapter one) and 5.2 (below). This structure for the discussion is maintained in chapters six, seven and eight.

'Simpler' graves (table 1.2, page 29)

Locating the grave

The immediate location context for many of these cemeteries is settlement or an otherwise constructed environment: this applies to at least ten, and perhaps up to twelve, of the sixteen sites under discussion here. Individual graves are predominantly located in the vicinity of others: only four sites consist of a single grave, and in these cases further excavation might well reveal more graves. At first glance therefore the simpler graves of all periods tend to belong within intramural cemeteries. An examination of the individual sites will show, however, that intramural burial was not necessarily the *normal* mode of burial.

37:Málthi: the hilltop settlement site of Málthi, overlooking the Soulíma Valley (**A1.*37*.1-2**), has 48 known graves, all but one located within the walls of the settlement. The graves are summarised in the catalogue entry in appendix one in tabular form (table A1.37.1). The chronology of the Málthi graves is a particularly intractable problem, of which I present an analysis in the catalogue entry. I conclude that, with a few clearly dated exceptions, the dates of construction and use of the graves cannot be recovered, save that most fell within the MHII-LHII band, and some may date to LHIII.

The graves were all, except for two pithos burials, inhumations in pits or cists (**A1.*37*.3-5**). The large majority were children, and most graves were single, although some were reused: 71 individuals were present in total. Almost all were located within the walls of rooms inside the settlement. They are not closely grouped in their location, but are found in five groupings that encompass most of the village (**A1.*37*.10**). The majority of those buried were children: children were present in 37 graves, adults in seven, three graves were empty, and other graves contained a mix of adults and children (see catalogue entry). Many of the children may have been infants.

Despite the chronological uncertainty, therefore, we are in a position to make some comments on the burials located within *37:Málthi*. First, it should be clear that the excavated burials do not represent anything like the total number of dead that we would expect for a settlement of even such a moderate size, especially given that the likely period of occupation is so long. This observation, in association with the noted disproportionately large number of child or infant burials, suggests that the sample excavated at Málthi is far from representative of the population. So far, therefore, from confirming that Málthi follows a pattern of intramural burial for the dead common in MH settlements, it rather seems that burial within the walls may have been an *unusual* circumstance. The predominance of child burials makes it tempting to imagine that, for at least some of the period of occupation, the burial of a child was more likely to take place within the walls, but that adult burial would be located elsewhere.

Those who made and used these graves faced a number of choices in grave location. The majority of burials are inside rooms, and often cut into walls, suggesting at first glance that they post-date occupation in their sector. Others, however, are buried in the floors of rooms, and the recorded evidence is inadequate to determine whether occupation in a room continued after a burial was placed in the floor (or even in some cases if the burial predates the room). These preferences would tend to suggest a concern to locate the dead within the domestic context. Alternatively, it is not inconceivable that the room or house was abandoned after the death and

burial of a child within. Perhaps the most likely possibility however, especially given the conclusions about *57:Ayos Stéfanos* to be set out below, is that burials took place in sectors of the town abandoned and perhaps in ruins at the time of the burial. In any case, a link between the domestic sphere and the dead seems certain. Given the lack of chronological control and the unrepresentative nature of the sample, these conclusions may relate to unusual or short-lived social traditions.

One perhaps significant clue is that the burials at *37:Málthi* seem grouped in five areas (**A1.*37*.10**). If it were possible to prove the general contemporaneity of burials in a given group (which it is not), this might in all cases prove that the burials post-date occupation for their sector, since in each group at least one and usually more burials clearly cut through house walls. Lack of stratigraphic control has led to a picture suggesting that the walls of each broad phase at *37:Málthi* were all in use at once, whereas the evidence from most excavations tends to suggest that settlement sites present a confusing palimpsest of house walls due to regular rebuilding throughout the period of occupation. We have no idea of subphases at *37:Málthi*, but it may well have been the case that the use of sectors and buildings for habitation and for burial alternated regularly over fairly short periods (compare *57:Ayos Stéfanos* below, and discussion of burial locations in the Argolid in Hägg & Nordquist 1990, 42).

What can be said is that burials at *37:Málthi* are *not* located in those wide areas of the citadel where occupation is not attested. These are areas where bedrock projects from the surface and were unsuitable for habitation; Valmin claims (1938, 53-54) to have investigated these areas, although it is possible that not finding house walls he may have examined it less thoroughly and missed some graves. Nevertheless, almost all the known *37:Málthi* graves are located on, in, within and between domestic walls. One burial outside the citadel (XXVII), an adult, hints at the alternative possibilities (Valmin reports the testimony of the landowner as to other burials: 1938, 231): one suspects that further adult burials might well lie undiscovered outside the settlement walls on the crown of the akropolis, or on its slopes.

Although the majority of *37:Málthi* graves are single inhumations, a number contained evidence of multiple use (12 graves out of 48, or 25%). These graves are listed in table 5.1, below. Three of these graves contained collected bones, and one is likely to represent a dual inhumation; the other eight examples (that is, 16.67% of all graves) are likely to represent graves used on two separate occasions for interment. The reused graves are either cists or pits with stone outlines, and the children buried in these graves seem usually to have been very young (below two years) - however this is not unusual among the *37:Málthi* sample. The reuse

of graves was therefore neither common nor sought after, but was not unknown, and when practised the location of the grave was presumably brought about through the visibility of the cist or pit-with-stone-outline amid the ruins of domestic architecture (see also page 142 below).

Grave	Grave type	Number of individuals	Description	Number of funerary events
7	pit/stone outline	2	Two infants, articulated, supine	Buried at same time?
18	cist	2	Two infants, articulated, supine, one buried above the other	Two separate interments?
19	cist	2	Two infants, articulated, one supine, one on side, one lying above the other	Two separate interments?
23	cist	2	Two infants, articulated, supine, one buried above the other	Two separate interments?
25	pit/stone outline	2	Two infants, disturbed	Unknown
26	pit/stone outline	3	Three or four infants in two layers	Two separate interments
32	cist	7	Seven disturbed graves	Unknown
34	pit/stone outline	2	Two disturbed graves at opposite ends of the pit, on the floor	Unknown
36	pit/stone outline	2	Two disturbed graves at opposite ends of the pit, on the floor	Two separate interments?
37	pit	3	Two adult and one child, disturbed	Unknown
38	pit	8	Eight disturbed burials	Unknown
40	pit/stone outline	2	Two disturbed graves	Two separate interments?
42	pit/stone outline	2	Two infants, one articulates, supine, the other disturbed	Two separate interments

Table 5.1. Graves at *37:Málthi* containing more than one individual.

57:Ayos Stéfanos: an analysis of the data from *57:Ayos Stéfanos* as presented by Taylour in the 1972 preliminary report (thus excluding later excavations which are only superficially reported) is presented in table A1.57.2. (in the catalogue entry for this site). This analysis is an attempt to reconstruct as far as possible contextual relationships between graves, burials and surrounding contexts: floors and walls. This is based on the data contained in the preliminary report, which was not designed to allow for such an analysis. Plans exist of all trenches but sections are mostly unavailable, and textual descriptions rarely place a burial in context.

In general it has proved impossible to reconstruct contextual relationships between graves and their surroundings. One or two cases are quite clear, but because they are so few in number they tell us little about the general tradition of burial. Close study of the 1972 report has however led to some important observations. In what follows the material is discussed in the order of Taylour's trenches. Trench A is located in the centre of the site, trench D to the north, and trench B to the south (Taylour 1972, figure 1).

Area D (**A1.*57*.12**): Taylour recognises two alignments of walls among the remains, and one set is clearly later than the other. He suggests that the earlier walls are either EH or early MH in date, on the basis that some pottery of EH date is associated with some of the walls on the same alignment in trench A to the south. Floors are not explicitly described in the report and are not placed in relation to the walls. The finds from the excavation here are all LHIII with the exception of one EH and one LHI/II item. The later series of walls is dated to the MH period on the basis that burials D7 (**A1.*57*.15**) and D25 (**A1.*57*.13** right), both quite well-dated to MH, are later than the second series of walls. Some rebuilding is perhaps attested in LHIIIB. The small amount of pottery recorded from the trench (without context) is all fineware, which leads one to question what coarsewares were present and how they should be dated.

The only absolutely clear-cut instance of a contextual relationship between a burial and domestic architecture that may be read from the preliminary report is that of burial D10, which lay on top of wall bc. Taylour supposed that this skeleton had been removed from one of the cist graves nearby and placed on the wall. Wall bc is part of the earlier series of buildings. In the cases of other burials where it is clear that a relationship existed, for example burials D27 or D25, there is little in the report to facilitate assessment of what that relationship might be. Burial D7 is said to cut wall bb, and D25 is said to disturb walls bl and bm. It seems likely that burial D27 cuts into wall bo. The burials in trench D are all dated MH or LHI, although a good many of those are so dated without specific artefactual evidence.

On the basis of the evidence as we have it, those burying in area D were making use of an area not at that time used for settlement. The sequence is:

First building phase (EH or early MH)
Second building phase on different alignment (MH)
Cemetery (MH-LHI)
Some rebuilding (LHIII)

As far as choice of location is concerned in trench D at *57:Ayos Stéfanos*, rather than a strictly intramural setting, it appears likely that burials were being placed in an area not then used for settlement. Those burying there would, however, hardly have been unaware of the detritus located directly beneath the ground. Each act of grave construction would be likely to throw up the remains of the past. Therefore it may be that choice of location was governed by the presence of ancestral remains in the area. This brings to mind the situation at for example

17:Voïdhokiliá, where an MH mound was heaped up of EH settlement remains (other examples of this phenomenon are given below).

Area A (**A1.*57.*3**): this is located at the crown of the site, to the south of area D. Here the domestic architecture seems to represent three phases, two EH and one MH, with LH material present in the upper layers but not associated with architecture. The burials of this trench are either EH or MH in date, with two noted as 'MH/LH?' The MH walls are listed as ad, ax, ar, aq, ak. The two graves represented by A29 (**A1.*57.*6** right) are presumably dated 'MH/LH?' because both seem to cut into the continuation of ar, the supposed apse of a long apsidal building whose west wall is ad.

In general it seems likely here that all the burials are disassociated with contemporary domestic structures. If there is a long apsidal building to the east, its relationship to the burials is unknown (save that A29 should presumably be later). I believe that here also the best interpretation of the limited evidence is that the burials formed an intervening phase when the area was not used for domestic structures. The preponderance of cist graves in the southern part of this area is also of interest, suggesting that that particular location may have been deemed more suitable to a slightly more monumental form of grave architecture (for example, A23 **A1.*57.*6** left; A31 **A1.*57.*7**).

Area B: the stratigraphy in this area was extremely complex, as explained by the excavator, and it is impossible to offer any assessment as to whether burials in this area were made among then-current habitation or not. Taylour did not recognise an EH period in this area, but did find both MH and LHI architecture.

Other areas: these trenches cluster on the west side of the site. These trenches are too small to make any statements about the context of burials.

To summarise the contextual analysis of the earlier excavations at *57:Ayos Stéfanos*, it is suggested, on the basis of limited evidence, that most MH-LHII burials were located in areas known to have been inhabited in the past but *not actually inhabited* at the time of interment[1]. While the burials are generally dispersed throughout the excavated areas, in some cases they seem clustered together, for example in the north-central section of trench D, and some larger cist graves seem centred around the southern section of trench A. If these observations are

[1] Similar observations elsewhere are listed by Cavanagh & Mee: 1998, 24.

valid, then in the act of location choice for those burying at *57:Ayos Stéfanos* two factors may be present: a desire or tradition that burial take place among ruins associated with ancestors, and a topographic logic suggesting that one burial may be positioned relative to another in accordance with some perceived conceptual relationship.

The sizes of the trenches that produced this formidable number of burials are small, and given the presence of adult and child burials in almost even numbers, it seems more likely here than at *37:Málthi* that the whole population is represented, although more chronological control is needed to determine the lengths of use of cemeteries. Thus, although there are problems with the interpretation of both sets of material, it seems that a reasonable working hypothesis is that *37:Málthi* and *57:Ayos Stéfanos* do not reveal similar burial practices. At *37:Málthi* intramurial burial is restricted to a minority of people, usually children, and the practice may well be restricted chronologically. At *57:Ayos Stéfanos* intramural burial seems much more likely to be a standard practice, perhaps throughout the MHI-LHII period which is here under study; it is however possible that the practice became less common toward the end of the period. Ultimately, with no knowledge of the true extent of the site, the intensity of its inhabitation, and the true number of intramural burials, it remains an open question whether burial or other funeral rites might have at times been conducted elsewhere.

Very few of the *57:Ayos Stéfanos* graves were reused, despite the fact that architectural refinements such as stone surrounds may well have made them visible for some time after construction. Only three graves contained more than one burial, and although in other cases skeletal material had been disturbed by later burials, it is often clear that these later burials were not being specifically located in the same pit or cist - making it likely that the earlier material was discovered fortuitously. In locating the grave therefore, although graves were placed in a cemetery context, there does not seem to have been a specific tradition of returning to graves to use them again, but it was not unusual to come across and rebury skeletal material in the cemetery area.

<u>Other 'intramural' sites</u>: although with sites such as *3:Nisakoúli*, *9:Karatsádhes Loutró*, *35:Peristeriá*, *37:Málthi*, *41:Filiatrá Stomion*, *48:Miráka*, *53:Menelaion*, and perhaps *59:Pavlopetrí*, one can say that people chose to bury within an area of settlement, this does not imply that intramural burial was the *normal* choice, since the number of known graves is small, and other burial locations may not have been sought or found by excavators and surveyors. Choice of location may therefore be dependent on other factors; as already noted at *37:Málthi* for example, the majority of burials are of children.

The meagre evidence also indicates that where intramural burial was being practised, it may again be disused parts of settlement where such burial was taking place. The single grave at *41:Filiatrá Stomion* (**A1.*41*.2**), for example, seems to be situated in a previously used area of settlement, but not in a layer indicating current occupation[2]. At *53:Menelaion*, on the Aëtos hill (**A1.*53*.1**), burials were made in an area previously used by two MHII kilns, with no other evidence of occupation. When the graves were built, the area was seemingly not in use in any other way. At *48:Miráka*, graves appear to be located slightly away from walls (**A1.*48*.1**); there is however no stratigraphic information as to the relationship between walls and graves. The relationship between the *24:Englianós* grave and any possible contemporary habitation is unknown.

The child graves at *35:Peristeriá* were placed in the floors and walls of the rooms of the East (**A1.*35*.51**) and North Houses, suggesting (but not proving) that the burials post-date the use of the areas for occupation. The chronology of the East House, based on the objects found within, places its destruction at the very end of LHI, with the construction of tholos tomb 1 following almost immediately (Lólos 1985, 540). If the child graves post-date the habitation of the East House, they form a brief funerary prelude to the construction of tholos tomb 1. The habitation period of the East House is contemporary with nearby tholos tomb 3 and south tholos 1. No structure on the hill has so far been shown conclusively to have a middle helladic phase, so the earliest tombs and other structures are broadly contemporary. Are the structures simple dwellings amidst the tholos tombs, or are they part of an infrastructure more directly related to the tombs themselves? The location of burials in the East House after its abandonment, and its subsequent partial destruction and complete burial in the construction of tholos tomb 1, reinforces the significance of the mortuary aspects of the hill from MHIII to early LHIIA.

At *3:Nisakoúli* two burials, one in a pithos and the other extended in a pit, lay within a few metres of a middle helladic 'altar' (a third burial was of iron age or later date, or had been disturbed then). It seems possible that in this unusual case the 'altar' formed a point of focus around which burials could be located. The reported area of excavation is quite wide, but no other burials are reported. The altar seems to have been used often, so perhaps the burials were located here because of the importance of the altar, rather than the altar being a primarily funerary device. A building was noted in the vicinity. One other child's burial is known to have been located amid the walls of settlement.

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[2] This is dependent on my understanding of stratigraphic details in a report which is preliminary.

Extramural tombs and cemeteries: few sites seem to represent extramural cemeteries: *45:Makrísia*, *50:Armátova*, *51:Análipsis*, 55:*Amikléon*, *56:Yeráki* and *61:Krokeés*, but these are either unexcavated or very poorly understood. At *56:Yeráki* (**A1.*56*.1-3**), the burials were located on an akropolis probably inhabited in the middle helladic period, at *61:Krokeés* survey indicated that the tomb may located in the midst of settlement, and at *55:Amikléon* it is possible a habitation site was nearby. The cist tomb at *51:Análipsis* was found near the tholos tomb cemetery, although the connection is obscure. Each of these potentially extramural sites is located on high ground, whereas the locations of all the sites under consideration here are highly variable, ranging from akropolis sites like *37:Málthi* (**A1.*37*.1-2**) and *46:Makrísia* to sites on the plain like *57:Ayos Stéfanos* (**A1.*57*.1-2**) and those on the coast like *59:Pavlopetri*.

In summary, the sample of sites discussed here can hardly be imagined to be representative of any time or region. It seems likely that the reasons for burial locations will have been locally determined and understood, and there will never have been a general trend. However, much more well-excavated evidence is required to pursue this question properly.

Procession and gathering

The relationship between places of burial and habitation, which has formed the main subject of discussion concerning the location of simpler burials, also to a great extent defines the parameters of movement to and gathering at the grave. In a very few cases, where it is possible that the dead were buried in the house where they died, there would be no transportation of the corpse and consequently no procession; but it is suggested that such burial formed a very small minority of those under discussion here, or none at all. Therefore in most or all cases a procession following the corpse to its grave is at least likely. Where burials took place within or adjacent to the inhabited area, such a procession would pass through the streets of the town; at *57:Ayos Stéfanos*, where it is suggested that the burial grounds were not inhabited at the time of their funerary use, the procession would come perhaps from a nearby inhabited area and then pass into the abandoned part of the site now used as a cemetery.

Extramural burial was probably normal for adults at *37:Málthi*, while intramural burial may have been more normal for children: processions and routes of movement to the grave would consequently vary with age at death. This perhaps also applies at *48:Miráka*, where the burials in or at the edge of settlement are all of children. It does not apply to *57:Ayos Stéfanos*, however.

The ability for the mourners to gather at the grave is constrained by grave architecture and by the immediate environment. As described in chapter six, all of these burials are placed in simple graves such as pits and cists, which have little modifying effect on the environment in terms of freedom of movement. Mourners may therefore gather around these graves with no particular orientation and no favoured position. In the case of intramural graves, the built environment would clearly have an effect in constraining this freedom to gather; however, given the suggestion in many cases that the surrounding architecture was out of use and probably in ruins by the time it was used for burial, the effect may have been minimal. In some cases, however, if a burial took place within a standing structure, the number of people able to attend at any given time would be quite limited. This might reflect either the small-scale nature of the event, or else it might allow for a section of the funeral to be private, something participated in by a select group of people.

THE MHI-II PERIOD (TABLE 1.7, PAGE 33)

Locating the grave

The locations of the five sites considered here can be related to a wider landscape of burial mounds: at *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia*, the excavated site is part of a group of at least eight[3] and perhaps sixteen[4] mounds; at *17:Voïdhokiliá* there are two known mounds; at *27:Roútsi* there are three; at Kokorákou (*35:Peristeriá*) there is a single mound, excavated as part of the investigation of the nearby later Mycenaean cemetery.

14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia: the excavated mound and others are located on the raised level of the plateau on a ridge top that is fairly broad and gentle at that point (**A1.*14*.6**). This location is at the northern end of a core of funerary sites of middle or very early late helladic date (described below). Within 2-3km of the site are *15:Plátanos* to the west, Iklena (Sirlopoúlou 1994, 686) to the southwest, where MH sherds at two sites indicate possible settlement, another possible settlement to the southeast (McDonald & Hope Simpson 1964, 232), and *27:Roútsi* to the northwest. Four unexcavated mounds are located within about 400m of the site.

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[3] Including the site itself, the four listed by Korrés as nearby (see site entry), and three at *15:Plátanos*.
[4] Those in note 3 above and others mentioned by Marinátos: see site entry.

Thus at the excavated mound one finds oneself surrounded on all sides by the ever-fainter resonances of other sites. Settlement and other burial mounds[5] are located only a few minutes' walk away, and other sites are on the periphery of proximity.

There is also some evidence concerning the choice of location for the excavated mound. We cannot speculate on relationships between nearby sites because lack of excavation means that the exact chronology is obscure. At the mound of *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia* itself, though, there is evidence in the form of a few sherds of the early helladic period from the matrix of the mound that EH settlement was located in the close vicinity. It is therefore likely that this burial mound was created close to or on top of an 'ancestral' settlement, as is the case with others noted below, and recalls the practice of interment in the ruins of settlement noted for many of the simpler graves above.

17:Voïdhokiliá: this site is located on the coast at the north end of the Bay of Navaríno, on the north side of what is now the entrance of the Bay of Voïdhokiliá (**A1.*17*.6**). The situation is spectacular: to the west and northwest, the sea; to the southwest, the continuation of the peninsula toward Sfaktíria (**A1.*17*.2**); to the south and southeast, the Bay of Voïdhokiliá and beyond the lagoon (Osmánaga) and the Bay of Navaríno (**A1.*17*.2**); to the east and northeast a small plateau and beyond, the coastal plain (**A1.*17*.6**); to the north, the hill of Profítis Ilías. The precise position of the mound is on the narrow neck of land running southwest but pierced by the sea so that the mound on three sites is surrounded by low cliffs and the sea. The site is widely visible around, to the north from Profítis Ilías and to the southwest from the height of Paleókastro (**A1.*17*.3**).

Known sites in the vicinity include Voïdhokiliá mound B on Profítis Ilías, postulated to be similar to mound A. Korrés speculated that settlement might be located in between, on the small plateau (1977a, 287). Elsewhere MH occupation is attested in the Cave of Nestor (below Paleókastro; Siriopoúlou 1994, 227), as well as EH and late Mycenaean. Bronze age occupation including probably the middle helladic period is attested in the nearby Osmánaga Lagoon (McDonald & Hope Simpson 1964, 232-233; 1969, 149-150). Another mound with pithos burials is likely to be situated a little to the south (*25:Dhivári*).

The tumulus of *17:Voïdhokiliá* is itself heaped up of the mixed settlement remains of an EHII habitation site located under and around the later MH monument. Excavation has revealed a

[5] Because they are unexcavated, the contemporaneity of these sites is not secure; they are broadly MH in date.

number of walls and rooms along with many artefacts. One wall is said to be neolithic in date. This site is the clearest example of the occasional relationship between previous habitation and burial, where the existing locale has been radically transformed in form and meaning through the construction of the MH burial monument.

27:Roútsi: these mounds are located to the east of the Englianós ridge and are separated from it by a deep gorge. The general location is that of a broad ridge-top (**A1.*27*.1**). A short distance to the southeast are the sites around *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia*, as noted above.
Once again early helladic sherds were found in the matrix of one of the mounds (the Kaloyeropoúlou mound), raising the possibility that the location of this mound, at least, was influenced by the presence of earlier habitation remains.

35:Peristeriá: the Kokorákou mound and the area of *35:Peristeriá* generally are located on the south side of the Soulíma Valley above a high sheer face (**A1.*35*.5-6**). The Mycenaean site of *35:Peristeriá* is located 500m to the east of and somewhat below the site of the mound of Kokorákou, which seems to have been placed at the north end of a high ridge so as to overlook the valley to the north and perhaps the site of *35:Peristeriá* below and to the east (**A1.*35*.1, A1.*35*.4**). The location of this site is at the boundary between the valley and the mountains: it is possible that it was located on a route into the mountains from the valley; alternatively its position might have been chosen as marginal to routine paths, but in a position to overlook them.

Aside from the nearby and slightly later site of *35:Peristeriá*, where there is evidence for MHIII/LHI habitation and burial, no sites are known in the immediate vicinity, nor is there evidence of earlier habitation. The nearest known site is probably that of Vrises, about 4km southwest, again located above the Soulíma Valley, where there was slight evidence for habitation (Sirlopoúlou 1994, 676).

In summary, the foregoing observations on all sites confirm the general preference for elevated situations already remarked on in chapter one. In several cases burial monuments make use of, or at least interfere with, 'ancestral' material in their matrices: locales that were already resonant with human activity. Beyond these observations, it is difficult to come to any deep understanding of the location of these sites in the wider, inhabited landscape. Observations of proximity to nearby sites are compromised both by chronological uncertainty and more fundamentally by incomplete survey and lack of excavation information from those sites that are known. The lack of associated settlement in many cases may well be an actual phenomenon

rather than an artefact of preservation or observation. It is legitimate to imagine that the organisation of burial practices and the location of sites in the landscape might have operated on principles more complex than a one to one relationship between a given burial monument (or monuments) and a settlement site: this is amply confirmed by taking the mainly unexcavated sites of the following section into account as well.

It remains to consider the location of burials within monuments.

14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia: as there is no specific evidence that the central construction was ever used for burial, it is perhaps presumptuous to discuss it here. There is however an interesting contrast between the two main phases of the mound. If we assume that the horseshoe-shaped construction was originally planned as a burial chamber, then the architecture of the original mound tends very much to emphasise and create a focus on that burial space (**A1.*14*.17**). It is central in a construction that rises around it and from the landscape, and is made prominent by its elevation and its flat stone capping or paving. The 'burial' space is emphasised by its covering of larger stone slabs, and perhaps (the point is unclear) by installations outside at its 'entrance' and a possible break in the mound to create a way in and line of focus. It is also possible that this first phase was covered by an upper layer of earth.

If the central construction should be regarded as originally a burial space, then it is the only such space within this first phase architecture. Peripheral burials or their remains have not been located (although it should be noted that the mound has not been fully excavated). The location of burials in the mound at this time, if there were any, was therefore largely predetermined by the architecture.

The second phase enlarged the mound and buried the central construction (or buried it more deeply). However the second phase architecture (as described in chapter six) was explicitly designed to accommodate a series of peripheral radial burials in large pithoi (**A1.*14*.5, A1.*14*.7**). This leads to two observations: first, the second phase of the mound changes its nature from a monument with a single burial space to one designed to accommodate more burials, one after another, in separate burial spaces. Second, because of this design, it seems that, even if the location of burials was not exactly planned in advance, the architecture of the mound facilitated the placing of burials in certain places rather than others (and concomitantly the mode of burial also seems predetermined).

The consequences of these observations are important in an overall interpretation of these burial practices. Having chosen this place as the location for burial, the monument itself partly structured burial practices. Its architecture, as well as a shared history of how that architecture had already been interpreted, facilitated some kinds of burial practice (burying in the periphery of the mound) and constrained others. In thus structuring the funeral, the mound need be reinterpreted and its structures reworked. In this way the concerns and precepts of those who created the second phase mound were continually brought into discourse as each new funeral was made to happen, and through time this projection of the ideas physically embodied in the mound became a palimpsest of superimposed burial acts.

The burials of this mound were generally located in its periphery. The dead were placed in large pithoi which are then placed within the mound at a point determined by opening the upper stone layer to make space. In general the pithoi were placed radially, mouths pointing to the periphery, bases pointing to the centre, although there are one or two exceptions (detailed in the catalogue entry). The pithoi were placed high in the mound, projecting from the shallow cuttings in which they are set (again there are one or two exceptions). In choice of location within the mound, therefore, most times a certain uniformity seems to have been respected, in this as in other aspects of the funeral. This again points to funerary rituals that reproduce and rework perceived traditions.

The other burials of the mound are mostly later than those in the pithoi, and are mostly regarded as later than the chronological bounds of this study (detailed in the catalogue entry). One, number fourteen, is quite possibly middle helladic in date and conformed in location and orientation to the pithoi: it was set radially in the periphery. The very small cists 6, 9 and 10 do not conform to these principles, and equally exhibit quite different burial rites, in that they contained the mixed bones of children. It is possible that these are MH in date. These later burials were located in the mound, but with less respect for (and knowledge of?) the orientations demanded of the primary series of burials.

17:Voïdhokiliá: the history of mound A at *17:Voïdhokiliá* in the MHI-II period is somewhat simpler than its counterpart at *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia*, consisting of only one architectural phase. The location of burials in this mound follows a similar logic to those in *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia*. Again they consist of pithos burials placed radially in the mound, mouths to the periphery and bases to the centre (**A1.*17*.9**, **A1.*17*.7**). The site as excavated presents a more confused picture because in its later history some of these pithoi were exhumed and reburied at different points within the monument. Two non-pithos burials are also associated with the

mound. One cist burial was located on the peribolos of the mound, cutting it and not obviously oriented with respect to the centre of the mound. The other was found on the east side and oriented east-west, so perhaps aligned with the mound.

In terms of location of burial, then, the mound at *17:Voïdhokiliá* seems to have acted through its architecture and people's perception of it, as well as the mode of burial, to structure funerary practices. While the construction of the mound and the specific acts of construction for individual graves differed from *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia*, the spatial logic understood by those who used the mound seems to have been identical to that understood at *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia*. In this logic both the relationship between the burial and the mound, and those between burials, acted in determining location. The radial placement of burials is therefore a result both of the architecture of the mound and of an awareness of other burials at the time of interment. This logic applies equally to *17:Voïdhokiliá* and *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia*.

27:Roútsi: In comparison with the previous two sites, the positions of burials within these three mounds are much less clear. Of the mound made of stone no burials are mentioned. Of the Yorgopoúlou mound, there is a brief mention of cist graves.

In the Kaloyeropoúlou mound at least one pithos burial similar to those of *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia* and *17:Voïdhokiliá* was found, along with one peripheral cist tomb and a central pit, similar in shape to the central construction at Papoúlia, its edge outlined with stones. The meagre information does not allow the reconstruction of a chronological series for these graves, so their relationship to each other in that sense is obscure. While the picture presented by the incomplete excavation seems less structured than that for *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia* and *17:Voïdhokiliá*, it is worth pointing out the large and unusual pit in the centre of the mound (**A1.*27*.2**), perhaps forming a focus of activity and so perhaps relevant to the later act of making a new burial.

35:Peristeriá: one pithos burial was located in the northwest periphery of the Kokorákou mound, oriented with the mouth to the outside and the base to the centre. At least two other pithos burials were present. It is possible therefore that a similar locational logic was employed at this site as at *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia* and *17:Voïdhokiliá*.

Reuse, both of burial monuments in general and individual graves in particular, is indicated by the evidence at each of these sites. None of the monuments under discussion here, or in the following sections, appears to have been used only once. Their monumental appearance and

often eminent location ensured that, once constructed, they became a more or less permanent part of the inhabited landscape, and hence open to continuous reassessment. The intent of their makers is unlikely to have been to make a monument to an individual; but even if it were, that intent was quickly subverted, so that each of these monuments seems to have accrued multiple (though not very numerous) burials, often following similar burial customs.

There is also evidence for the reuse of individual pithoi, cists or pits: examples are *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia* pithos 5, where a second skull was inserted into the pithos; pithos 19 of the same mound, where a second interment followed the first (**A1.*14*.22**); others of the pithoi from this mound may have been reused or otherwise interfered with - information from the 1950s excavations is sketchy; certain other cists from this mound with multiple remains may or may not date to the middle helladic period; from *17:Voïdhokiliá* pithoi 4 (**A1.*17*.19**) and 6 (**A1.*17*.21**) contained second interments post-dating the first; one cist in the Kaloyeropoúlou mound at *27:Roútsi* contained four skulls, evidence not only of a return to the grave but probably also of interference with the other graves in the mound. There may be other instances: older excavation reports can be vague on this topic.

The graves in this sample are marked in two ways: in being located within a defined and raised area (the mound) and, in the case of most pithoi, in being located within graves themselves monumental and visible. The locations of most pithoi, not buried deeply and with mouths to the outside, raised above the level of the mound, leads to the impression that such graves were placed deliberately that their mouths would be easily noted, even if closed by stones (**A1.*14*.23**). This in turn suggests that it was intended that the pithoi be accessible, and hence be open to being located again. However, although reuse of existing graves was clearly possible, it does not seem to have been a regular practice: most graves were used only once.

Procession and gathering

None of the sites under discussion here is closely associated with settlement (the closest likely example, the postulated settlement site at *17:Voïdhokiliá*, is several hundred metres distant from each burial mound). The monument therefore forms a point in the landscape to which the mourners must move in order to carry out the funerary rites. At *35:Peristeriá*, the burial mound of Kokorákou, located some 500m west of Peristeriá on another hill, would have been a visible point to which the mourners would have toiled with the corpse. This time of movement or procession may well have been slow and disordered, but nonetheless have involved a body of

people with a unity of purpose. The situation is similar at *17:Voïdhokilià*, where each identified mound is located above the supposed settlement site.

Although other factors may have played a rôle, the only certainty of procession is the need to transport the corpse to the burial place. With these burials, not only is the burial monument elaborated beyond the 'simpler' graves discussed above, but also the mode of burial is elaborated. Most of the burials in these mounds, in particular those related to the MHI-II phase, involved large pithoi (these artefacts are fully discussed in chapter seven). The procession would be emphasised by the requirement to transport the pithos to the grave. Four or more people would realistically be required for this task, unless the jar were transported on a wagon, which would present its own difficulties. Blitzer (1990) talks of rolling the pithos down a hill, but the *pitharia* in question were strengthened with ribs for this reason.

A number of possibilities are present, depending on whether the body was inserted before or after the procession: if before, then the procession would focus on the pithos, as it was carried on the shoulders of the mourners, dragged along by them, dragged along by a donkey or similar, or carried on a wagon. If the body were not already inside the pithos, then the procession would have two foci (or indeed there may have been two separate events). In any case, it is clear that the process of movement from elsewhere to the grave is elaborated by the need to bring the pithos.

The monumental burial place located at least a short distance from settlement, and the need to transport corpse and pithos to that monument, ensured that a group of people would be required to move from settlement or wherever the corpse was held before burial to the place of burial. The need for people to act together to move heavy items (the corpse and the pithos) suggests a group moving together. A procession is therefore almost certainly an important part of the ritual of burial associated with these monuments.

These mounds are listed in table 5.2 below.

Site		Construction date	Date range of use
1	Finikoúnda	MH possible	No information
2	Evangelismós	MH probable	MH
4	Mesohóri Gdhiti Rahi	MH possible	MH
5	Yálova Paleohóri	MH possible	MH
6	Píla	MH probable	MH
8	Handrinoú Kissós	MH probable	Probable MH-LHII; certain LHIII
15	Plátanos	MH probable	MH; likely LH
20	Tragána Kapoureíka	MH possible	MH
21	Lefki Kaldamou	MH probable	MH
22	Pírgos Tsoúka	MH possible	MH
25	Dhivári	MH probable	MH
28	Kánalos	MH possible	MH
29	Válta Kastráki	MH possible	MH possible; LHIIIA1 certain
33	Milióti Ayos Ilías	MH possible	MH
49	Máyeira	MH possible	MH; LHIII

Table 5.2. Tumulus sites of likely MH date.

Locating the grave

Most of these monuments are located on high points: *1:Finikoúnda* (**A1.*1*.1-2**), located at or near the top of a hill overlooking the sea and the Gulf of Messinía; *4:Mesohóri* (**A1.*4*.1**), situated on a crest above the surrounding plain; *5:Yálova*, on top of a ridge or ridges high above the coast and Navaríno; *6:Píla* (**A1.*6*.1**), on top of a ridge at the interface between the coast and the hinterland, with views over Navaríno Bay; *8:Kissós* (**A1.*8*.5**), the excavated mound situated rather dramatically on the edge of (now) cultivated land as it drops into a ravine that runs alongside the high conical hill of Profítis Ilías, one of the most visible landmarks of this part of Messinía; *15:Plátanos* (**A1.*15*.2**), situated at the end of a low ridge; the seven mounds of *20:Tragána* and *21:Léfki*, strung out along the great Ambelófito ridge, and at various raised points on the ridge (**A1.*21*.1**, **A1.*21*.3-6**, **A1.*21*.8-9**, **A1.*21*.17**); *29:Válta*, where if a mound ever existed, it was situated on a high point in the landscape, perhaps on the saddle between hills; and *33:Milióti*, if it is a burial mound, is said to be located on the crest of a ridge.

This list includes most sites under discussion in this section. Of those not included, none can be said to occupy a non-prominent position: for example, none has been found in the ravines between the ridges of western Messinía (although there is a possibility of bias in the intensity of searches). The reason for this is not merely that there was a preference for prominent points in

the landscape; it is also that the very architecture of a mound, which juts out of its surroundings and attracts the focus of those approaching it toward its centre, is served and enhanced by a location at the most prominent point in the landscape. The few located on non-prominent areas nevertheless become prominent because of their protrusion from the landscape (for example *2:Evangelismós*, and in the previous section, *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia*: **A1.*14*.2, A1.*14*.9**). In other words, the logic that makes the form of the mound prominent is clearly enhanced by the choice of a prominent point for the mound.

This is not however the only consideration in these locations. Although by no means universal, in many cases it seems that these mounds were located not merely on high ground, but at marginal points of the landscape that may seem to serve as interfaces between the coast and the interior, and may well be related to routes from the coast inland. This would appear to be the case with the Ambelófito ridge sites (*20:Tragána* & *21:Léfki*), where a series of mounds is strung out along a ridge running from the coastal strip up into the Messenian plateau; other sites as noted above are located on hills or ridges above the coast: *1:Finikoúnda*, *5:Yálova*, *6:Píla* and *29:Válta*. Other sites are clearly at points of interface, although not of coast and inland; most notably, *8:Kissós*. Similar considerations might be applied to some of the sites investigated in the previous section: *35:Peristerá* Kokorákou, and *17:Voïdhokiliá*; and similar factors apply to some of the later sites discussed below.

Not all sites fulfil the criteria of placement in a marginal location, and in each individual case transient factors rooted in the individuals involved would have played the most important rôle in location. The observed preference for marginal locales resulted from those individuals' understanding of the landscape and an appropriate place for the dead in it. While the dead were to be hidden away in the mound, the *presence* of the dead, through the medium of the prominently positioned mound, was to be made permanent. The marginal locales served to emphasise the cultural landscape: in prominence and visibility, in location on everyday or rarely used pathways, between coast and hinterland, between lowland and upland, and between the locales of life: settlement, cultivated areas, harbours. The mounds of Messinía are located *between*; they refine the meaning of the interface.

Given that most of these sites are unexcavated, it is generally unknown whether any of them are located on top of previous settlements, as some of the mounds discussed in the previous section were (a single EHII sherd from mound 123 at *21:Léfki* provides the merest hint of this).

The locations of graves within monuments is hardly open to investigation in unexcavated monuments. A few have provided a little evidence: many of the mounds on the Ambelófito ridge (*20:Tragána* & *21:Léfki*), for example, apparently showed evidence for 'cover slabs' and pithos fragments, evidence that different modes of essentially single burial were practised at the sites.

The very visible stone slabs reported again and again in connection with these mounds, if correctly interpreted as grave cover slabs, may well have been as visible in the past as they are to researchers in the field today. If the slabs were left uncovered by earth, or indeed if one or more was set upright, then they may well have formed markers on the surface of the mound, visible reference points to memories of past events, each new burial perforce located in relation to those others made visible on the surface of the monument. The same applies to cases where pithos burials remained prominent on the surface of a mound.

Little more can be said of the sites that have been excavated. At *8:Kissós*, for example, the mound contained a number of burials in pithoi and in 'grave enclosures'. The sequence of construction and deposition for this mound is rather unclear (see catalogue entry), but I assume that the pithoi were earlier and the 'grave enclosures' later: the locational logic of burial may therefore have been similar to that at some of the sites discussed in the previous section. At *49:Máyeira*, it appears[6] that a mound contained several (at least four) funerary pithoi, although nothing is known of their arrangement, which may have been disturbed in a later period in any case.

Procession and gathering

The point that these sites are generally located in marginal locations, not directly related to settlement, adds emphasis to the necessity for a processional phase as part of the funerary ritual. As noted with the excavated mounds above, this phase must in many cases have involved movement from settlement or from any given starting point toward the mound, often involving a climb to its elevated position, some at least of the mourners burdened by the body and perhaps in many cases by a large pithos as well.

[6] The interpretation of this site is problematic: refer to the catalogue entry.

With the possible exception of Kokorákou at *35:Peristeriá*, all sites discussed as MHI-II (table 1.7, page 33) continued to be used in this period, and *8:Kissós* was also probably in use.

Locating the grave

None of the sites under consideration here seems to be isolated from other, similar sites, with the exceptions of *16:Korifásio* and *46:Makrísia*, where it may simply be that associated monuments have not been discovered. We can therefore say that in almost all cases monumental funerary sites of the MHIII-LHI period in the area under study are found in groups of closer and wider associations, and indeed are often associated with earlier or later monuments as well. These groupings are set out in table 5.2 below.

Site		Associations
7	Dhiódhia & Stréfi	Likely two other tholoi nearby
8	Handrinoú Kissós	Three other mounds at around 1km distance from excavated mound
10	Gouvalári	Eight mounds containing tholos tombs (where excavated) at site; akropolis site of Kataraháki over gorge; five other tholoi of early Mycenaean date in vicinity (*12:Koukounára*); another tholos perhaps late Mycenaean; *13:Kamínia*
13	Kamínia	two mounds at site; *10:Gouvalári*
14	Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia	Mound with three or seven other mounds in the vicinity; three mounds around *15:Plátanos*; three mounds and two tholos tombs at *27:Roútsi*
16	Korifásio	None/uninvestigated
17	Voïdhokiliá	Two mounds
23	Volimídhia	Cemetery of at least 34 chamber tombs; *24:Englianós* 4km distant
24	Englianós: Vayenás & tholos IV	One other tholos (LHII); LHII chamber tomb and later chamber tombs; *23:Volimídhia* 4km distant; on Ambelófito-Tragána ridge to west and northwest, two LHI-III tholoi (*18:Tragána*) and perhaps many MH burial mounds (*20:Tragána* & *21:Léfki*); others more distant to the east
27	Roútsi	Three mounds and two tholoi; *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia* close by
30	Nihória	Group of (likely) five MHIII or LHI tholoi; two other early tholoi nearby; mound; LHIII tholos tomb
32	Paleohória	Unknown/1.5km from *10:Gouvalári*
35	Peristeriá	Five tholos tombs, MH burial mound, MH-LH grave, other graves
39	Psári Metsíki	two or more tholos tomb, possible other funerary monuments
43	Káto Samikó Klidhí	five or six tumuli, one tholos
46	Makrísia: Profítis Ilías	None/uninvestigated
51	Análipsis (small tholoi)	eight small tholoi; LHII tholos; MH cist nearby
58	Epídhavros Limirá	chamber tomb cemetery (at least 10 tombs, LHI-IIIC)
62	Kíthira: Kastrí	A group of seven and more chamber tombs, and four caves used as chamber tombs

Table 5.2. Groupings of burial monuments. Many are intervisible; some are simply proximal, and a few are related by other features, as explained in the text below (for example, sites 10 & 13 by the Potámi tou Arápi).

The listings in table 5.2 demonstrate that

- single tombs are almost never found, and where they exist inadequate investigation might explain the apparent absence of other tombs;
- most tombs therefore exist in close proximity to others (usually under the same site name and catalogue entry);
- moreover (in Messinía at least) the tombs and groups are linked in wider landscape networks of this period and of preceding and succeeding periods.

10:Gouvalári collectively refers to numerous monuments, and taking into account nearby and linked sites it forms the centre of one of the largest funerary complexes of Messinía. The site itself consists of eight mounds, not all of which have been (legally) excavated, but those that have were shown to contain tholos tombs. The most prominent mound encircles the two larger tholoi (the only tombs regarded as 'proper tholoi' in the traditional typology: chapter four for the excavation of this site). This mound is situated at the highest point above the *Potámi tou Arápi*, a stream (officially the Gouvalári River) that has cut an extremely deep bed with sides straight down. The other main excavated mound (A) lies to the east of the mound with the two tholoi, across a basin-like drop (**A1.*10*.50**) that separates the edge of the Potámi and the two tholos tombs from the main flat area of the Messenian *kámbos* that otherwise surrounds the site. No survey of the site has been published, and I have not been able to produce even a rough sketch of the area, for reasons explained in the catalogue entry.

The Potámi tou Arápi (**A4.13**) is the most interesting landscape feature in this area, and it has been made use of in the topology of the burial monuments of the area. This area of flat and fertile land which stretches as far as the eye can see has its modern bounds are defined by the villages of Koukounára to the west, Stenosiá to the southwest, Handrinoú to the southeast, Soulinári to the east, and Kremmídhia and Velanídhia to the north and northeast. The Potámi tou Arápi runs southwest from Kremmídhia to just east of Koukounára and further south. It effectively cuts the main area of the plain off from routes to the coastal strip to the west, as the Potámi is largely impassable. It therefore forms a barrier and a likely route southwest to northeast on this side of the plain.

At the site of *10:Gouvalári* the width of the Potámi is minimal (certainly less than 50m). On the west side, opposite the mound with the two larger tholoi, a small akropolis juts out toward the site and above the surrounding landscape. This akropolis (Katarahákí; **A1.*10*.51**) was occupied

in the MHIII-LHI period, and excavations have the superimposed remains of two buildings[7]. Despite the proximity of the mound and the akropolis, there is no route between the two (I estimate about 2 hours to walk between the two, using a point in the river cutting to the south that is today passable). Even if the gap were bridged by a rope or wooden construction, the landscape setting remains extraordinary. Although the view between the two sites is now obscured by thick vegetation, one can imagine that the sight of the tholos mound from the akropolis, or the sight of the akropolis from the tholos mound, would be striking.

A number of other funerary sites is strung out along this gorge in both directions, predominantly on the east side: on the west only the site of *11:Akónes* has been discovered. On the east side, starting from north and moving south, the known sites consist of two mounds at *13:Kamínia*, the mounds of *10:Gouvalári* and a small tholos nearby at Pollá Dhéndhra, two mounds (one at least containing a tholos tomb) and one other (underground) tholos at *12:Fitiés*, and one or two tholoi at Livadhíti (*12:Fitiés*). One further tholos tomb at *32:Paleohória* is probably some distance from the gorge (perhaps about 1.5km east of it, situated in the middle of the plain). The majority of these other sites (the exception being *13:Kamínia*) date to LHI-IIA or later, and are discussed in the next section.

Another, perhaps less clearly defined, funerary landscape is formed of the monuments of and around the later Palace of Nestor (*24:Englianós*). Specifically only the Vayenás tholos tomb and tholos IV seem to date to this period, but in the immediately succeeding period another tholos tomb and a small chamber tomb cemetery come into use. Englianós is one of the series of ridges running northeast to southwest toward the Bay of Navaríno (**A1.*24*.3**). The surrounding landscape has recently been studied by Nigel Spencer under the auspices of the *Pylos Regional Archaeological Project* (Spencer 1995). He draws attention to the number of funerary and settlement sites around Englianós, and in particular points to the likely high visibility of the prominent mounds of the Ambelófito ridge (*20:Tragána* & *21:Léfki*) from the palace site (**A1.*21*.1, A1.*21*.3**). To suggest that all these monuments were placed so as to encircle the site of the later palace may only be part of the explanation: both the Englianós ridge and the Tragána-Ambelófito ridge may have been well-used routes from coast to hinterland, and the monuments located on them will have been and become locales entwined in these routes. In the

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[7] Here Marinátos excavated the remains of at least two buildings, one of which measured 10.8m x 5.5m and contained two column bases, suggesting that its usage might be something more than domestic (**A1.*10*.52**). He suggested two phases of use, LHI and early LHII, but these excavations are so slight and provisional that we should be careful about these results. Middle helladic pottery is also noted, and there are other buildings on the hilltop. The pottery characterisation was confirmed by Lólos (1985, 28-41), who also published a sketch of the remains taken from Marinátos' notebook (*ibidem*, figure 27).

case of the *24:Englianós* monuments, however, the locations of the monuments were partly defined in relationship to the location of the later palace.

The later Palace of Nestor is set on a low eminence on the high point of the ridge, covering an area of about 170m northeast to southwest and up to 80m northwest to southeast. Tholos V is located some 145m south-southwest of the later palace, on slightly lower ground, while tholos IV is located some 100m northeast of the eminence (or about 180m northeast of the later palace **A1.*24*.9-10**); in other words, the three monuments are located in a line on top of the ridge (general plan, Blegen *et alii* 1973, figure 301). The many small tests on the palace site have confirmed middle helladic and early Mycenaean occupation of the site, while the enclosure wall (Blegen *et alii* 1973, 8-18; **A1.*24*.9**) is believed to be an LHI construction: the entrance of the wall is aligned with the dromos of tholos IV. The two tholos tombs of this date therefore form part of the wider locale of the occupation of the later palace area in the MHIII-LHI period.

About 4km north of Englianós is the site of *23:Volimídhia*. Of the 34 and more tombs at *23:Volimídhia*, the earliest (Kefalóvriso 1) is the only one of differing morphology: it may be a funerary mound, or a simpler grave (**A1.*23*.1, A1.*23*.18** left). It is dated to MHIII, and more or less immediately was followed by the construction of chamber tombs in very close proximity. By the late LHI period the number of these had reached more than 34, and the area of the cemetery covered several hundred metres east to west and north to south.

The first question to be answered in relation to the location of this site concerns the initial founding of Kefalóvriso 1. This monument is unique in this site in not being a chamber tomb, and its purely MHIII pottery contrasts with the other chamber tombs, all containing Mycenaean pottery. It is possible that other such early graves might not have been discovered. There is little to explain the location of Kefalóvriso 1. It is set in the middle of a plain, and although it may have been covered by a mound, it was certainly never a prominent point (the later chamber tombs are set in the same flat ground and are non-prominent). Whatever prompted the location of Kefalóvriso 1 at this point, the earliest chamber tombs of the cemetery were built in very close proximity (20m to 30m at most) to it, perhaps even before it went out of use for burial, and almost certainly while it was still a visible point in the plain. The other groupings of tombs seem likely to date to a slightly later phase in LHI.

The second question relates to the interrelationships of the tombs. Although they were regarded as clustered when excavated, this does not seem to be the case: tombs were found during the

excavation in proximity to each other in different areas, suggesting different groups. Now that 34 or more tombs have been excavated, the three groups of Angelopoúlou, Vorlá and Kefalóvriso seem in fact to form a more or less continuous area (about 250m east to west and about 100m north to south), and only the Koroníou group still looks to be separate from the main area (about 200m to the north of the Kefalóvriso group). Scant traces of settlement in the vicinity are dated LHI/IIA (Lólos 1985, 23-27). All of these elements - the MHIII burials, the LHI chamber tombs, and the LHI-IIA 'settlement' - must be considered in an interpretation of the formation of the cultural landscape of *23:Volimídhia*.

The chronological evidence - flawed as it is - is strongly suggestive of a hypothesis that has an initial burial site chosen at Kefalóvriso, and in the aftermath the construction of a number of chamber tombs in the same place. Then, during a relatively short chronological horizon, many more chamber tombs would be constructed over a larger area and as far away as the Koroníou and Angelopoúlou areas. It is possible that other strictly MHIII graves remain unexcavated, but all the chamber tombs are *at the earliest* MHIII-LHI, and most are LHI or LHI-IIA (as argued in the site entry). The 'settlement' evidence, such as it is, comes late in this sequence, making it possible that the existence of the 'settlement' is a result of the presence of the cemetery, rather than the other way round.

Individually, the tombs were located in relation to one another, as shown not only in physical proximity but also in orientation. The majority of the tombs are oriented with dromoi to the west, and in some cases are clearly lined up (especially those in the Angelopoúlou area, where the tombs are built next to each other in a very slight slope). The growth of the cemetery is most easily understood in terms of an expansion westward from the core group at Kefalóvriso, with orientation to the west. Only the Koroníou group is significantly differently located.

The landscape of *23:Volimídhia* is not immediately impressive. The cemetery is located in almost flat land to the north of the modern town and away from the highly dissected country to the south and west. The area is a small plain, with the Egaléon mountain range rising to the north and east. The flat land and the spring of Kefalóvriso make the area a good candidate for settlement, as it is in modern times, and was clearly in Roman times (the entire area of Volimídhia is thickly scattered with Roman sherds). Its position is further emphasised both as a small plain between the mountains to the north and east and the ridges to the south and west, and as a likely crossroads of routes between the coast and the mountains.

30:Nihória is located on the other side of the Egaléon range from most of the Messinía sites, and so does not belong to the network of sites on the west coast. The Nihória ridge itself is spectacularly situated (**A1.*30*.1, A1.*30*.3**), especially approaching from the south, where the ridge rises some 40m above the land below (Lukermann & Moody 1978; Rapp 1978). On the north side too, the ridge is prominent from the surrounding landscape. The tombs collectively referred to under this name are located in various places, not on the ridge itself but mainly on its west side: perhaps significantly, as the west side is the easiest approach to the ridge itself.

These tombs are unusual in being so explicitly associated with a large settlement site. The surrounding area of Nihória was fairly intensively inhabited in this period, and other likely MH or early LH tombs have been located (detailed in the catalogue entry). Likely routes of movement between sites suggest the location of burial monuments in relation to those pathways (Lukermann & Moody 1978).

Two sites are located in the far north of Messinía, in the Soulíma Valley: *35:Peristeriá* and *39:Psári*. The former is an akropolis that rises dramatically in sheer cliffs on the south side above the valley bottom and the river (**A1.*35*.5-6**), no great distance into the valley from its western coastal terminus. The approach to the site may well not have been directly from the valley, but rather from the coast (as it is today). The earliest component of the burial sites is the mound of Kokorákou, on a separate ridge to the west; on the akropolis itself one large tholos tomb is located in the central upper part of the site, with two other tholoi lower and to one side (**A1.*35*.3**); the other tholoi are on a plateau at the bottom of the akropolis; the entire area is surrounded by higher land on all sides, especially to the south where lie the mountains (**A1.*35*.7**). This site is again therefore at topographical margins and likely positioned on routes of movement (as noted above).

The site of *39:Psári*, much further along the length of the valley, is one of the more remote of all those in this thesis: on the north side of the valley, high in the mountains, the tholoi are situated on an akropolis site jutting outward to the south (**A1.*39*.1**). Although this location is much more remote than *35:Peristeriá*, the situation is similar, on an jutting and sheer akropolis overlooking the valley.

Further north, in southern Ilía, *43:Káto Samikó Klidhí* is one of two sites in this period. The site lies on the coastal strip, on flat land within sight of the sea, the mounds clustered around a natural eminence forming an akropolis (**A1.*43*.1**). The known mounds are located to the east

and to the north of the akropolis. Sherds found during the excavation of the tholos tomb indicate not only MH but also EH settlement in the vicinity.

46:Makrísia Profítis Ilías is located on a hilltop site; MH and LH sherds collected on the hilltop suggest settlement, and there is a report of two Mycenaean graves nearby ('Haniá', west of this mound) and the LHII site of *45:Makrísia Arnokatáraho*.

In Lakonía, the tombs of *58:Epídhavros Limirá* are located in the eastern peninsula of the southern Peloponnese, close to the shore on the east side, on the slopes of a narrow ravine (**A1.*58*.2**). A sloping location is normal for chamber tombs (unlike many of the *23:Volimídhia* examples), and the 'requirement' to build into a slope to some extent constrains the choice of location. There are two sets of three tombs, the others being more spread out, but without proper investigation of the slopes for further tombs it is useless to speculate on the differing possibilities surrounding the grouping of tombs. There are no other sites nearby (see notes on the regional archaeology below).

The remote *51:Análipsis* tombs are located in the upland far north of Lakonía. The site in this period consists of at least eight small tholos tombs, and there are indications of previous use in the form of an MH(?) cist grave, and another tomb of unknown form.

The tombs of Kastrí (*62:Kíthira*) are set in the Asproga hill and on nearby ridges (**A1.*62*.1**), and others are known elsewhere from the island (see site entry). These are similarly set in sloping land, and there appear to be both clusters and single examples.

As with some of the sites mentioned in previous sections, so certain of these sites (*16:Korifásio, 43:Káto Samikó Klidhí*) appear to have been founded in or above early helladic settlement débris. The location of these sites amid the detritus of former settlement will have impacted on those using the sites during construction phases and may have been a factor in choice of location.

A rather similar situation obtains with the Akónes site at *30:Nihória* where an MH/LH or LH mound was constructed on top of earlier MH settlement débris: in this case, the architecture of the burial spaces mimicked the ruined domestic architecture under the mound.

Certain sites in use in this period were being reused after a phase of disuse. The most likely candidate is *17:Voïdhokiliá*, where an LHI tholos tomb was set in an MHI-II mound. Some

continuity is evidenced in the finds (detailed in catalogue entry), but the construction of the tholos tomb and attendant alterations in the mound and locations of its burials constitute a refounding of the mound: in choice of location, therefore, a site with (perhaps ill-defined) ancestral associations was selected. It is possible that *13:Kamínia* went through a similar, though shorter, period of disuse between pithos burials and tholos tomb construction, although the chronology is less clear.

It should be clear from the foregoing discussion that there is marked regional variation in the known distribution of the funerary monuments of this period. The locations established by the few excavated sites of the MHI-II period, and the concentrations suggested by the unexcavated burial mounds, are very much reinforced by the distribution of the sites under discussion here. The main concentration of sites is that of the Messenian *Kámbos* west of Egaléon and the coastal strip; other sites are found in the Soulíma Valley, on the Messenian Gulf, in Ilía, and (one) in eastern Lakonía, but these areas do not seem to have the concentration of numbers and types found in west Messinía. Two questions may be asked: what leads to the concentration of tombs in one area, and how are those individual examples from elsewhere to be explained?

Before attempting to answer these questions, I propose to review the regional data, noting also the general context of known sites. Half of the 18 sites under discussion in this section[8] are located in a small area of central western Messinía, roughly triangular in shape, defined by the sites of *17:Voïdhokiliá* to the southwest, *8:Kissós* to the southeast, and *23:Volimídhia* to the north, and comprising a series of ridges running southwest toward Navaríno, and the plain area to the east of them. This area also includes three of the five excavated MHI-II sites and six of the 15 MH mounds (**A4.14**). Although part of the reason for this remarkable concentration must lie in the intensity of survey that has been carried out in this region over the years, other parts of Messinía have been equally intensively surveyed without similar results (the *Pylos Regional Archaeological Project* has not added to the number of known sites). The distribution maps of Messinía in the MH and LHI periods produced by Sirlopoúlou (1994, 694; 1995, 798) show clearly that this apparent concentration of funerary sites is borne out in considering the general concentration of discoveries in this area (chapter one).

Elsewhere in Messinía (**A4.6**), *7:Dhiódhia & Stréfi* and *30:Nihória* are located between the head of the Messenian Gulf and the southeastern foothills of Egaléon, and *35:Peristeriá* and *39:Psári* are located to the north, in the Soulíma Valley. If we take the evidence of the unexcavated

[8] *8:Kissós, 10:Gouvalári, 13:Kamínia, 14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia, 16:Korifásio, 17:Voïdhokiliá, 23:Volimídhia, 24:Englianós,* and *27:Roútsi.*

mounds into account, then there is one other funerary site in the area of *30:Nihória* and *7:Dhiódhia & Stréfi*, although no others in the Soulíma Valley. The evidence for all known sites in these areas (Siriopoúlou *ibidem*) suggests that the southern part of the Messinía peninsula, roughly in a line from Pílos to Petalídhi, was not much inhabited in the MH and LHI periods: a situation that remains unchanged throughout the bronze age, save perhaps in LHIIIB. The areas around Nihória and in the Soulíma Valley, on the other hand, both show moderate densities of MH and LHI sites.

The Elean sites of *43:Káto Samikó Klidhí* and *46:Makrísia* are located within about 10km of each other. Makrísia in particular is located in the fairly densely inhabited area of the Alfeíos river and the general area south of Olímbia.

58:Epídhavros Limirá at first glance seems rather isolated, but other remains are known from the peninsula: there is a suggestion of middle helladic graves, for example, at Finíki, about 10km to the west of Epídhavros Limirá (Dhelivoriás 1969); at Dhemonía, about 15km southwest, there is an MH/LH site with possible pithos burials (Hope Simpson & Waterhouse 1961, 141); at Plítra, about 20km west-southwest, there is a site with middle helladic sherds (Hope Simpson & Waterhouse 1961, 139-140); at Stená, near Neápoli (**A4.17**) there is an LHI habitation site, as well as undated chamber tombs (Hope Simpson & Waterhouse 1961, 141-142). More undated chamber tombs were noted nearby at Neápoli, although only LHIII sherds were found at the nearby habitation site (Hope Simpson & Waterhouse 1961, 142-144; **A4.18** for a map of the Vátika area), and further chamber tombs, some with stepped dromoi like the Epídhavros Limirá examples, are reported from Ayos Yórgos, located between Stená and Neápoli (Hope Simpson & Waterhouse 1961, 145). Finally, the site of *59:Pavlopetrí* has MH or LH settlement and two likely LH chamber tombs. Thus the seeming isolation of the site may be partly illusory, although there can be no doubt that the Maléas peninsula was much less densely inhabited than other areas.

The tombs at *51:Análipsis* seem equally isolated: there are no nearby MH or LHI sites in Lakonía, although there are some in eastern Arkadhía. Further south in eastern Arkadhía is the site of Paleohóri Mikrí Toúrla (Hope Simpson & Waterhouse 1961, 132-135), where a number of early, tholos-like structures were excavated. Another group of small tholos tombs is noted '10 kilometres north of Analipsis', and also on the banks of the Sarandapótamos, and were thought to be LHIII in date (Hope Simpson & Waterhouse 1961, 130): this date was based on just a few items, which might easily represent a second or later phase at the site.

Having examined the evidence in the wider context of known sites, we can attempt to answer the two questions posed at the beginning of this section. In seeking to understand how sites come to be concentrated in particular areas, we can first note that the density of *settlement* in the area is not necessarily the main explanation. We are dealing with monumental graves, and so the mere pressure of population and the necessity to dispose of the dead do not by themselves explain a concentration of monumental sites in one area. However, the possibility that the Messenian *Kámbos* area might have been relatively densely populated opens up a number of considerations: first, the landscape in which these monuments came to be situated may be seen as more open to multiple possibilities of interpretation than a sparsely inhabited landscape. This is partly because we must assume that not only are there more individual human beings to move through and interpret the landscape in their daily lives, but also where populations are relatively large, more numerous and complex groupings may form, impacting on how the landscape might be understood and inhabited. One factor uniting the diverse monument types is that they provide for different types of collective burial, suggesting that part of the meaning of any funeral is to situate the dead, and perhaps in some sense a group or groups claiming affiliation with the dead, within a particular monument in the landscape: a monument with multiple historical and social references and interpretations.

The foregoing is not intended to be reduced to the simple statement that monuments likely belong to a single clan or family and indicate claims of ownership to the adjacent land. The concentration of these monuments in cemeteries or perhaps along routes of movement, as already suggested, does *not* lend itself to an interpretation in terms of territorial claims. Moreover the kinds of groupings that might use these monuments cannot be deduced from the monuments: this information is lost. While the nuclear or extended family is one possibility, it is one very much derived from our own society. Given that we know so little of the organisation of society in these periods, we can have no justification for claiming to see the controlling presence of family or clan merely on the basis that the numbers of individuals represented would on average be about right for a family or clan. Other corporate groups can exist in societies, did exist in the past, and exist now in different societies around the world.

Leaving the specific notion of 'family' aside, it is suggested that one part of the meaning of these monuments, and a structuring principle in how they were constructed and used, is the idea of the group. The very act of burial in such a monument marks the dead and his/her inheritors out as claiming a relationship to the other dead of the mound (and their inheritors). The appearance of the monumental burial site in the middle helladic period, and in particular its concentration in

this area in this period, is the result of a concern to express group identity in the funerary process, and establish lines of relationship (not necessarily kinship) and inheritance.

The relatively dense population of the Messenian *Kámbos* contributes in two ways to concentration of such monuments: first, the denser population may have led to tensions between groupings that came to be partly expressed through the monumentalisation of locale and the likely claims that go with it, and second the denser population may have led to the likelihood that 'successful' monuments - those that fulfil the expectations of those using them, in various senses - will be emulated elsewhere. This has been spoken of as 'competitive emulation' (for example, Voutsaki 1998). Competition, at least in the sense that we understand it, need not have been very important. The groupings involved in the construction of these monuments may not have been fixed, stable and institutionalised to a great degree, and they may not have regarded themselves and others in terms of absolute divisions. Groupings may have been loose, persons may have moved from group to group and have had multiple affiliations. Competition is therefore not a necessary element in this explanation. Emulation, on the other hand, is the primary factor in the typology of these monuments, as examined in chapter six.

Different explanations are required for the more distant and isolated monuments. In some ways, the form of the monument is one of the most important parts of such explanations, for the question does not revolve around the interactions of local groups, but rather asks how forms of monuments come to be used by fairly small groupings of people. The adoption of these monuments in other areas does to some extent place those groups of people within wider-scale interactions, not only in the areas under study in this thesis, but also (particularly) with the northeast Peloponnese, and with Crete.

The location of burials within monuments. The final aspect of practice to be considered under the heading of location is that of the location of burials within monuments. Here I consider two variables: both the location of burial *places* within monuments, and the location of burials within those burial places, where appropriate. These considerations go together with those concerning architecture, since the specific architectures of monuments and burial places within them have a direct bearing on the locations of burials. This section will consider only in general the evidence for where burials were placed within the monument and the relationships between the different places of burial in the monument. Examples from some of the better known sites are discussed below.

10:Gouvalári: of the eight mounds at this site, four have been investigated so that we know the locations of burial places and in some cases individual burials. Hence mound A contained ten individual burial places in the form of small tholos tombs; mound B contained a single burial place, again a tholos tomb; mound 2 contained three small tholos tombs; and the main mound contained two larger tholos tombs. It is reasonable to suggest therefore that the mounds of Gouvalári tended to contain more than one burial space.

As for individual burials at Gouvalári, most of the burial chambers were very small, yet contained relatively large numbers of individuals. These were accommodated by the disarticulation of skeletons, a practice that prevents us from investigating the positioning of skeletons in the primary interment. Although a number of articulated skeletons are present in these tombs, the long period of use means that they need not relate to the period under study here. In any case, burials were located either on the floor of the tomb or occasionally in pits in the floor (for example, **A1.*10*.24**). In the former case the burial is placed amidst the remains of previous burials (if it is not the first burial); in the latter case there *may* be a concern to separate the individual from the others in the tomb. As for the two larger tombs, there is little published data concerning the location or condition of human bone material.

13:Kamínia: the excavated mound contained burials in five small tholos tombs and in up to four pithoi. One of the pithoi contained a burial with the head uncanonically to the mouth of the pithos (**A1.*13*.8, A1.*13*.11**); another contained one or possibly two skeletons. The five tholoi present the same picture as at *10:Gouvalári*, although only one pit is noted: the excavation is incomplete and so in some cases more pits may be present in the floors.

The two different practices point to two different traditions in terms of how burials should be conducted, and in particular about their location. The pithoi fall very much into the tradition of sites such as *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia* or *17:Voïdhokiliá*, representing the location of individual or dual burials at various points in the mound. The tholoi contrast with these, in representing larger spaces for the location of more burials. It is significant that two of the pithoi were found partly worked into the matrix of the walling of one of the tholoi: they had perhaps been exhumed and placed there during the construction of that tholos. One of these pithoi was empty (the other was not investigated), and so perhaps not only were the pithoi worked into the very fabric of the new constructions, but perhaps also the skeletal content was removed and reburied in the new context of the tholos chamber.

17:Voïdhokiliá: the architectural alterations of the LHI period created a single burial chamber in a mound which had previously been used for pithos burials all over its surface. However, although the new understanding of the mound was firmly rooted in its conversion to a tholos tomb, the older meanings were both comprehensible to its users and respected by them, in that they exhumed certain of the burials and carefully reburied them in the periphery of the mound in a custom no longer regarded as appropriate for the contemporary dead. This evidence complements that of *13:Kamínia* in terms of the continuing use of and transformation of these monuments.

23:Volimídhia: the site consists of a cemetery of separate burial chambers, at least 34 in total, over a relatively wide area. The chambers were generally found to contain large numbers of individuals[9], and it would seem likely that the primary location of burial would be more or less central on the floor of the tomb. The presence of other skeletons might prompt either the removal of those skeletons or else the body may have been placed so as not to interfere with them. In any case, most skeletal material eventually ended up in the floor-level niches found in most of the tombs (or less frequently in floor pits). The chronological uncertainty means that we are unable to ascribe specific practices to different periods. These questions are discussed further in chapter eight.

24:Englianós: the *Vayenás* tomb consists of a single burial chamber. Burial locations, at least as they were excavated and so as they represented the final condition of the interior, were more highly structured than is usual. Both collected remains and individual interments were present, all deposited in pits in the floor (there was no scattered bone material on the floor). The individuals were found in a pithos in a pit, in a palace style jar bedded in the floor of a pit, extended in a pit (this burial is LHIIB-LHIIIA in date), in another pithos, this one set upright, and finally in another jar. The late date for final use and the structured tidiness of the tomb make it likely that much if not all of this arrangement is a result of events in LHIIB-LHIIIA. As for *tholos IV*, there is no information on the location of early burials.

30:Nihória: the little circle and the other tholos tombs (Nikitopoúlou 2-6, Véves) all present single burial chambers. The Nikitopoúlou tombs, however, are located within a natural knoll, so that although not part of an artificial mound like those at *10:Gouvalári* and *13:Kamínia*, nonetheless they have the appearance and effect of so being. Hence the Nikitopoúlou knoll has

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[9] It is impossible to be precise on this point as the information has not been recorded. It seems likely that a minimum average for the number of individuals found in the *23:Volimídhia* tombs would be between 5 & 10 persons; one tomb contained 47 skulls, although this might be the result of post-Mycenaean interference.

five individual burial chambers. The burials in the Nikitopoúlou and Véves tholoi were badly disturbed in all cases by interventions over long periods. The little circle is a special case: lower levels include an articulated skeleton in a pit and others, disarticulated, on and above the floor. At a higher level are the remains of eight or more individuals seemingly dumped *en masse* into the tomb from above (see full discussion in catalogue entry).

58:Epídhavros Limirá: this site consists of discrete groups of individual burial chambers in the form of chamber tombs; some of them also have side chambers. The information about burials is scant, but it is likely that burials would be located on the floors of the chambers, and after the dissolution of the flesh be moved. Pits and niches for disarticulated bones are mentioned, although these are not present in the side chambers.

Although the chronological evidence that places the construction and first use dates for all of these sites within the MHIII-LHI bracket is in most cases reasonably firm, none[10] of the burial chambers (tholos or chamber tomb) can be said to have been closed in this period and not re-opened later. Therefore the observations above on the location of burials in most cases suffer from the likelihood or certainty of interference with the remains and the introduction of new burials in later periods. Nonetheless, the evidence shows that monuments of this period created a specific area within them (a chamber) where burial could take place. Within this chamber, burials might be laid on the floor, or they might be placed in pits or cists (a link with previous practice). Skeletons might later be moved and placed within pits or niches. Therefore, the reuse of burial places (the choice to locate a burial in an existing tomb or grave), noted in previous monuments as multiple burials in a mound, with occasional reuse of graves, in this period is specifically facilitated by the various different types of monument.

Procession and gathering

Indirect evidence for procession (beyond the need to transport the corpse to the grave) can be found in the material culture associated with many of the burials found in these tombs (fully described in chapter seven). One of the intended effects of clothing a corpse in raiment of gold must have been to create a highly visible spectacle. This spectacle might have been played out in terms of an organised viewing of the corpse before burial, but it might equally have been achieved by processing from the point where pre-burial ceremonies were carried out to the

[10] Although only LHI evidence is recorded for a few of the *23:Volimidhia* chamber tombs, the recording of these excavations is inadequate and there is no certainty that those chambers were unused in later periods.

tomb. The particular effect of the gold would presumably have been to make the corpse flash blindingly in the sunlight; alternatively to reflect the torches during a procession in darkness. This latter function would also be repeated in the darkened chamber of the tomb. The bright gold masks the decay inherent in the corpse itself.

It will be argued in succeeding chapters that there is considerable evidence for the regular interference with and removal of material from the chambers of tholos and chamber tombs. Although much of this activity must have been related to the numerous instances of interment in many tombs, it may be that on some occasions the tomb might be opened for non-funerary purposes. At any time the removal of artefacts may well have led to their display outside the mortuary context: perhaps in the form of a procession mimicking that associated with interment, or else a relatively static display to a group of people gathered at the end of the dromos.

The specific façade of the tomb (chapter six) also opens the possibility for processing to and gathering at the tomb when closed; the façade would then form the stage for activities aimed at presencing the dead within among the living gathered outside.

The architecture of tholos and chamber tombs affects the manner in which people might have gathered at the tomb, and is discussed in chapter six.

The LHI-IIA, LHIIA and LHIIB periods (tables 1.12-1.15, page 34-35)

Locating the grave

Location of cemeteries in the landscape. Archaeological evidence indicates that the new sites of this period are rarely found in isolation, continuing the trend of preceding periods. This evidence is set out in table 5.3 below (compare table 5.2, page 119, for the preceding period).

Site		Associations
11	Koukounára Akónes	Two tholoi; nearby tholoi of *10:Gouvalári*, *12:Fitiés*, and akropolis site of Kataraháki opposite *10:Gouvalári*
12	Koukounára Livadhíti	Unexcavated tholoi nearby; *12:Fitiés* tholoi to north; further north, *10:Gouvalári*, Kataraháki
12	Koukounára Fitiés	Two tholoi; other monuments excavated and unexcavated to south; *10:Gouvalári* & Kataraháki to north
18	Tragána	Two tholoi; located at southwest end of Tragána-Ambelófito ridge parallel to Englianós ridge; Voroúlia to northeast, MH burial mounds at *21:Léfki* and *22:Tragána Kapoureíka* further northeast
19	Solinári Tourlidhítsa	about 1km from *8:Kissós*
24	Englianós	tholos III 1km southwest of earlier tholoi; chamber tombs close to palace area
26	Halkiás Aeliás	Unknown
31	Dhára (Fráma)	Unknown
34	Kámbos	none, but note the nearby 'Sotirianika treasure'
35	Peristeriá	five tholos tombs, MH burial mound, MH-LH grave, other graves
36	Kopanáki	three tholos tombs, other sites nearby
38	Vasilikó: Xeróvrisi	none close; *37:Málthi* (and two LHIII tholoi) about 4km distant
40	Filiatrá Ayos Hristóforos	tholos near or in settlement; another settlement about 1.5km distant
42	Kapláni	unknown but close to recorded sites near *1:Finikoúnda*
44	Kakóvatos	three tholoi; later 'palatial' settlement on akropolis above
45	Makrísia: Arnokatáraho	Unknown
51	Análipsis large tholos	eight small tholoi nearby, but otherwise quite isolated
52	Pellána	at least six chamber tombs; another chamber tomb cemetery less than 1km distant; other important sites apparently in the vicinity; but note no specific evidence for pre-LHIII has been published save the large chamber tomb
54	Vafió	vicinity of late Mycenaean settlement; *53:Menelaion* and *55:Amikleon* nearby
60	Sikéa	later tombs nearby

Table 5.3. Tombs discussed in this section and other sites nearby.

Two observations may be made on the locations of new tombs. One is that some tombs are built as part of already existing funerary landscapes. The best example of this is the LHII construction of five or more further tholos tombs on the Potámi tou Arápi axis (**A4.13**), bringing the funerary landscape of that area close to its final form. Other new tombs were built at *24:Englianós* and at *18:Tragána*, completing the array of monuments in the area of the later palace (save LHIII chamber tombs in the immediate vicinity of the palace).

In other cases it may be that tombs were located on established routes. This might be best illustrated by the example of *44:Kakóvatos*. Little is known of the akropolis site where later Mycenaean 'palatial' architecture was uncovered by Dörpfeld; but given the location of the tholoi on the route from the coastal plain to the akropolis (much as at Mycenae), it appears that the final approach to the akropolis was monumentalised by the foundation of the tombs; something similar may well have happened at *35:Peristeriá*.

The other observation is that, in terms of numbers, fewer tombs were built in these central areas in LHII than were built in MH-LHI; on the other hand, more were built elsewhere, either adding to existing sites and areas (*35:Peristeriá* and other Soulíma Valley sites), or in new areas (*44:Kakóvatos*, sites in Lakonía). There are also instances of sites in perhaps remote locations: *34:Kámbos*, in the Messenian Máni, has no near neighbours; the tholoi at Finikoúnda (*42:Kapláni*), *26:Halkías* and *51:Análipsis* are all isolated, highland sites. By the end of LHII the Soulíma Valley had a relatively large number of tholos tombs, not only the five tholoi at *35:Peristeriá*, but others both in the valley bottom, such as *38:Vasilikó Xeróvrisi* and the three at *36:Kopanáki*. Two others at *37:Málthi* were apparently built in LHIII (appendix two).

In the MH-LHI period, a tendency to concentration was observed in the location of funerary monuments. By LHII it is clear that this tendency has all but played itself out. Although new tholoi were built in the vicinity of *10:Gouvalári*, for example, it is unclear if any were built at the site itself; those known to be built in LHII are at some distance and tend to reinforce the wider landscape axis of the Potámi tou Arápi rather than focus on the site of Gouvalári itself (**A4.13**)[11]. Concentrated tholos construction in this period does occur at *35:Peristeriá* and at *44:Kakóvatos*, two sites far to the north of the central Messenian area.

The explanation for this lies in a change in the nature of funerary architecture which had already taken place by the end of LHI (chapter six): the ability to build larger tombs led to the normal construction of a single or at most two tholoi in a mound, rather than the numerous small tholoi in burial mounds at *10:Gouvalári, 13:Kamínia, 30:Nihória*, and perhaps *8:Kissós*[12]. These changes in architecture promoted single, larger burial chambers within mounds, rather than multiple small chambers. While many sites came to consist of two tholos tombs, few consisted of three or more.

Tholos tombs were located in wider networks of landscape path and locale. In some cases, such as the Potámi tou Arápi sites (**A4.13**), or those in proximity to the later palace of Nestor, the axes of these networks are obvious; elsewhere less so. But it would appear that a general shift occurred toward the importance of wider landscape networks and away from localised cemetery landscapes. The construction of tholos tombs at points more or less remote from existing funerary sites may have been intentional; differing locations may simply have resulted from the

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[11] The construction dates of the small tholoi at Gouvalári are discussed in the catalogue entry. I suggest that most were built in MHIII-LHI, even where this date is unsupported by ceramic evidence.
[12] In the sense that the 'grave enclosures' form separate, built burial areas within the tomb: I am not suggesting that they represent small tholos tombs (chapter six).

increasing willingness and ability of different communities or groups to participate in Mycenaean funerary traditions.

The locations of Mycenaean tombs in the survey area in LHII contrast strongly with patterns observed in the Argolid and other 'core' Mycenaean areas. Here the clustering of tombs in chamber tomb cemeteries was well under way in LHII, and was set to continue for the rest of the Mycenaean period[13]. In the area under study in this thesis, on the other hand, few chamber tomb cemeteries existed in LHII. These consist of the *23:Volimídhia* cemetery, which continued from the LHI period and therefore had a history of use, maintained in this period; other chamber tomb cemeteries scarcely exist. The one tomb in the Pellána cemetery that is securely LHIIA in date is a colossal imitation of a tholos tomb, and perhaps also drew on the architectural details (and architects?) of the Volimídhia cemetery for its inspiration. One tomb in the *60:Sikéa* cemetery might have been constructed in LHIIB, but if so was presumably isolated in the landscape. *58:Epídhavros Limirá* continues from the previous period, and Kastrí (*62:Kíthira*) continued to function into the LMIB period. It is also possible that other chamber tomb cemeteries known to exist in the Maléas peninsula might date to this period. One possibility is a north-south line of burial practice from the Argolid and surrounding areas down to the Maléas peninsula, with the obvious inclusion of cemeteries on Kíthira and at Knosós on Crete. The adaptation of Mycenaean burial practices to clustered chamber tombs may well have occurred largely on this north-south axis, with little influence on the east-west axis. Only in the LHIII period do chamber tomb cemeteries appear in significant numbers in the west: a great many were founded in Ilía in LHIII (appendix two), the explanation for which hardly lies in the western Peloponnese, but rather is as a result of lines of communication with the Argolid and Ahaïa. Few chamber tomb cemeteries came to be built in Messinía, although they certainly did exist; the eventual number of chamber tombs around the palace of Nestor, probably less than two dozen, hardly compares with Mycenae. Similarly few are known from Lakonía, save the examples already mentioned.

The corollary of these observations is that the introduction of the tholos tomb to areas such as the Argolid occurred at the very end of LHI or in LHII probably in much the same way that they came to be built in Lakonía. The tholos remained the normal location for monumental burial practices in Messinía, at least until the end of LHII, whereas tholoi in areas such as the Argolid or indeed Lakonía were much less common, and on average more monumentalised. The

[13] Cavanagh & Mee list in their catalogue for the early Mycenaean period 21 cemeteries or isolated examples of chamber tombs in the mainland and Peloponnese; these include eight cemeteries with five or more tombs.

Mycenae tholoi, for example, were clearly built with tholos tombs such as *35:Peristeriá* I or II, or Englianós IV in mind; not the smaller tholoi that predominate in terms of numbers. Chamber tomb cemeteries came to be normal in the Argolid and then throughout much of the Peloponnese and central southern Greece, while in Messinía and to some extent western Lakonía they were much less common, and in Ilía do not appear before LHIII.

Some regions of the study area remained without Mycenaean tomb sites: the Máni peninsula in Lakonía, although the tholos at Kámbos is situated on the west coast of the Máni south of Kalamáta, and Ilía north of the Alfeíos. This replicates the observations for the preceding periods.

The location of burials within monuments. In general tombs constructed in LHII contain a single burial chamber (some of the tombs continuing in use from LHI consisted of multiple burial chambers). There is no need to discuss the details of burial location within the monuments on a site by site basis, as a general homogeneity of tomb form and burial practice means that a general description with specific observations should suffice. For details, refer to individual catalogue entries.

There is therefore general continuity in the practices that led to the deposition of burials within tombs. Especially in tombs that continued in use from LHI to LHII, there is widespread evidence of the disarticulation of previous burials and their deposition in pits or niches. Primary burials were generally laid out on the floor of tombs, so for example the three supine skeletons found in the centre of South Tholos 1 at *35:Peristeriá* were probably placed there in LHIIB; they might also be placed in pits, as in the case of the pit excavated in the *54:Vafió* tholos, probably dating to LHIIA, which seemed to have contained the supine skeleton of a single adult. *27:Roútsi* tholos two contained LHIIA burials both in pits and on a kind of platform in the centre of the tomb; in one of the pits other, earlier burials had been disarticulated and reorganised.

The general difficulties of locating the original positions of burials caused by the near universal phenomenon of later interference applies to this period just as to the last and to the succeeding ones.

Procession and gathering

The continuity of architecture into this period implies a continuity in such activities as Procession and gathering. The general monumentalisation of tombs, and perhaps an increasing complexity of burial ritual, as evidenced at some sites and discussed in succeeding chapters, could have added to the importance of this phase. The wider scope of certain cemeteries or funerary landscapes (the Potámi tou Arápi sites, *35:Peristeriá*, *24:Englianós*, *23:Volimídhia*) may also have been brought about through, and have brought about, more complex understandings of the landscape articulated through processional activities.

Chapter Six

Architecture, grave construction and modification

'Simpler' graves (table 1.2, page 29)

Preparation of construction materials

There is little in the way of direct evidence for the use of tools at these sites, save the obvious fact that tools were presumably used for digging holes. In the context of sites such as *37:Málthi, 57:Ayos Stéfanos* and elsewhere, where burials are located within a settlement site, but (as suggested in chapter five) the areas used for burial were generally not in use for settlement at the same time, the material gathered and used in building cist graves or providing pit graves with stone surrounds would represent *disiecta membra* of settlement débris. Hence preparation for grave digging at these sites may often have included a direct engagement with the past in the form of dismantling of walls by removing stones for use in the construction of the grave.

Few if any of the sites under discussion show any evidence for working of stones. One might be the 'shaft grave' at *24:Englianós*, where Blegen suggests that some of the stones in the 'platform' in the bottom of the grave were worked, especially at the ends.

Other acts before beginning

There is no direct evidence of feasting *before* building one of these graves, and there are no foundation deposits associated with such small graves. No other evidence is available in relation to pre-construction practices. In some cases where burials perhaps *were* located within inhabited

rooms, preparatory acts before construction would at least have included the cessation of routine activity.

Digging or building the grave

For the two large excavated sites, *37:Málthi* and *57:Ayos Stéfanos*, a number of different architectural types has been identified; lack of chronological control means that it is not possible to suggest that different types may have been favoured in different sub-phases, although it seems likely that this was never anyway the case. Types are the earth-cut pit, the stone-built cist, the pit with a stone surround, sometimes with cover slabs, the pithos burial, and rarely cutting in the bedrock (for example, **A1.*37*.3** grave I: pit with stone surround; **A1.*37*.4** grave IV: cist grave).

Each of these types involves the same basic design concept: digging a hole in the ground that is more or less fitted to the corpse. Some graves, such as the shaft graves of Circle A at Mycenae, were obviously built in larger dimensions, presumably with the expectation of hosting more than one corpse. This does not apply to the graves in this sample: only *45:Makrísia Arnokatáraho* and *61:Krokeés* might seem to have been designed for multiple inhumations. The example at *61:Krokeés* is large (3m x 1.5m x 2m) and is described as a shaft grave; it is set in a late Mycenaean chamber tomb cemetery, and its date of construction is possibly LHII-III, thus making it marginal to this study. Very few details are available. The other example is even less well known, said to be a 'destroyed rectangular built grave' and dated LHII. The 'shaft grave' at *24:Englianós* is not large, and the shaft graves at *53:Menelaion* and *57:Ayos Stéfanos*, intact contexts, each contained only a single burial.

Graves at the larger sites certainly were reused, however: the only body of data available is that from *37:Málthi* (dimensions are not given for the *57:Ayos Stéfanos* material), and of the 48 graves at that site, Valmin supplies full dimensional data for only 24 (table 6.1 below, based on table A1.*37*.2). Graves vary between 12cm and 35cm in depth, and there is no correlation between depth and number of burials. On average, multiple graves are about 15% longer, 11% wider and 20% deeper than single or empty graves; but there such wide variation in the data as to make an average meaningless, and in any case the actual differences are small. It is therefore safe to say, with the *37:Málthi* tombs, that in creating dimensions for a grave its destiny as a single or multiple grave was not anticipated.

Grave number	Grave type	Number of individuals	Adult or child	Dimensions (height x width x depth)
37	pit	3		205cm x 75cm x 32cm
1	pit with stone outline	1	child	53cm x 28cm x 22cm
7	pit with stone outline	2	child	80cm x 38cm x 34cm
10	pit with stone outline	1	adult	128cm x 44cm x 12cm
16	pit with stone outline	1	child	47cm x 24cm x 19cm
25	pit with stone outline	2	child	60cm x 19cm x 20cm
26	pit with stone outline	3		85cm x 22cm x 24cm (upper part only)
36	pit with stone outline	2	child	50cm x 29cm x 13cm
40	pit with stone outline	2	child	44cm x 23cm x 21cm
3	cist	1	child	45cm x 18cm x 22cm
4	cist	1	child	62cm x 26cm x 20cm
6	cist	1	child	56cm x 28cm x 36cm
9	cist	1	child	48cm x 25cm x 18cm
14	cist	1	child	34cm x 20cm x 12cm
17	cist	1	child	65cm x 28cm x 26cm
18	cist	2	child	62cm x 23cm x 34cm
19	cist	2	child	65cm x 18cm x 22cm
23	cist	2	child	75cm x 20cm x 35cm
24	cist	1	child	60cm x 50cm x 32cm
27	cist	1	adult	148cm x 28cm x 28cm
31	cist	1	child	38cm x 18cm x 16cm
32	cist	7	child	64cm x 39cm x 32cm
35	cist	1	child	38cm x 14cm x 18cm
47	cist	0		68cm x 38cm x 32cm

Table 6.1. Graves at *37:Málthi* with full dimensional data.

It may however be that the method of construction might have some bearing on its possible re-use. One third of *37:Málthi* 'pits with stone outline' are multiple (7 of 21), and half of pits (2 of 4); but only four of 17 cists are multiple, and neither of two pithoi. At *57:Ayos Stéfanos* there are only three multiple burials, so comparison is not possible. The provision of the stone outline to a pit might have been intended to indicate a possibility of future reuse, but it is more likely that it simply made the grave conspicuous and so in later episodes more likely to be reused. It seems likely that multiple burial was almost never a factor in tomb design and construction for these sites (see also pages 101-102 above).

The *37:Málthi* tombs are conspicuously shallow where data are available (table 6.1), no matter what their construction method. It is unfortunate that comparative data from *57:Ayos Stéfanos* are not available but it seems likely that these graves also are shallow graves. The stone outlines above certain pits probably formed a peribolos that after closure would have retained a low mound of earth (these periboloi might be added as part of the closure of the grave rather than its construction).

To some extent variation in grave lengths is accounted for by the difference between adult and child graves. This is apparent both in the graves listed in table 6.1 (and in table A1.37.2 for

those graves where length and width but not depth were given by Valmin) and in the plans of graves from *57:Ayos Stéfanos* (**A1.*57*.3**, **A1.*57*.9**, **A1.*57*.12** and Taylour 1972, figures 2, 11, & 15), where it is clear in many cases that graves were built in accordance with the dimensions of the corpse that they were intended to receive. Hence there seems, for most if not all of these graves, to be a clear relationship between the act of digging the grave and the deceased: graves were intended for a specific person.

Although this last point may seem trivial, it is in fact crucial to an understanding of the institutional structures being reproduced during these acts. At both *57:Ayos Stéfanos* and *37:Málthi*, and at many of the other sites in this sample, the acts of grave construction and of interment were closely related: a grave was created for a specific dead person, who was then interred in it, and in most cases this represents the end of observable events. One aspect of the changes in tradition that occur is a separation of these two acts, so that grave building is no longer necessarily connected with the death of one person, and burial is no longer necessarily connected with grave construction.

Floors are not often described: many consist of natural earth or bedrock. There are a few examples of pebble floors: *57:Ayos Stéfanos* (site 57), where graves A1 and A2 had floors of 'small, rough stones', as perhaps did TT7-3; *37:Málthi*, where grave 33 had a floor of pebbles and sherds; and *41:Filiatrá Stomion*, where pebbles covered (and marked?) the grave, although in this case these may have been larger stones. Pebble floors are discussed in relation to MHI-II sites below.

Acts at the end of the construction phase

No traces of feasting or other ritual associated with the end of construction are known.

Opening the grave

The act of opening the grave only applies where the grave had been closed: hence not to newly constructed graves, but only to reuse of existing graves. Chapter five shows that few graves fall into this category, mainly at *37:Málthi*. In these few cases, having located the grave the act of opening would be relatively simple, requiring the excavation of the small amount of earth covering these shallow graves; perhaps in some cases graves were rediscovered and opened by accident (this happened in some cases at *57:Ayos Stéfanos*, leading to the reburial of remains).

Closing the grave

There are two kinds of evidence to be considered here: artefacts found in the grave and thought to relate to its closure, and the act itself, evidenced in the fill or the architecture. There are few artefacts whose deposition might be interpreted as having taken place during the closure of the grave. In D12 at *57:Ayos Stéfanos* a 'miniature bronze chisel' was found in the fill above the skull. This suggests that it was cast or placed in the grave after it had begun to be filled with earth. In D13 at the same site a flint 'saw' was found above the grave. Again this may have been placed or cast in the fill, but as Taylour notes "Flint was rare except in the shape of 'saws', which mostly occurred in the Δ area" (1972, 262), so this artefact may have been in the fill anyway, or been introduced in later disturbance.

Methods of grave closure are limited to the use of cover slabs and the introduction of earth into the grave, or a combination of the two. Cover slabs seem to have been used relatively rarely: at Málthi at least eleven of the 48 graves had cover slabs (numbers 2, 4, 7, 8, 9, 12, 16, 19, 23, 24, 27 and perhaps 34; illustrated **A1.*37*.3-5**); at *57:Ayos Stéfanos*, only A31, D24, D25, perhaps D27, and TT7-3 & TT7-5 are noted as having been covered with slabs. The *57:Ayos Stéfanos* graves are adult burials save for D27. The shaft grave discovered in the later excavation period had a slab cover over the lower pit: four slabs were used. The *53:Menelaion* shaft grave similarly had a covering of six slabs over its lower pit (**A1.*53*.2**). The grave at *41:Filiatrá Stomion* was covered in pebbles, of unknown size, perhaps as a marker.

Graves TT7-3 & TT7-5 at *57:Ayos Stéfanos* were covered with slabs, one over each grave being incised with linear designs (**A1.*57*.10**). It is unclear whether these designs were made during construction or earlier (either in preparation for the funeral or indeed if the stones came from some other context); the significance of the incisions is obscure.

THE MHI-II PERIOD (TABLE 1.7, PAGE 33)

Preparation of construction materials

No tools have been found that may have been used in the work. Mounds are generally made of earth and unworked stones: these would have to be gathered. Ditches have not been noted at any of the sites, leaving open the question of source for both stones and earth. The stones in the *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia* mound are carefully laid flat stones, but probably not worked (perhaps

the covering slabs for the central construction were slightly worked). At *17:Voïdhokiliá* much of the construction material was culled from the EH settlement débris. Preparation may therefore partly have consisted of the more or less careful selection of material and dismemberment of remains. At *27:Roútsi*, the mounds are very large and so required a great deal of construction material. At *35:Peristeriá* the Kokorákou mound is ringed with a massive peribolos consisting of large rounded stones probably brought up to the site from the river in the valley below. This would have been a considerable operation and suggests a relatively large number of organised people involved in constructing the monument - an observation that applies to each of the sites mentioned above.

Other acts before beginning

The mound of Kokorákou (*35:Peristeriá*) was founded on a natural eminence, and the excavator reports a thin burned layer on top of this knoll and below the earth added in the construction of the mound. Although excavation was limited, this suggests that the eminence was prepared by setting a fire on top of it. This fuel for this fire may simply have been the vegetation naturally present on the mound, or further combustible material may have been brought for the specific purpose. Although such a fire, if set simply for the practical purpose of clearing the vegetation before raising the mound, could have had minimal significance, it may equally be the case that the fire was a symbolic part of the construction process, removing nature in order to bring about the construction of a cultural artefact. If lit at night, it may well have been a visible beacon over a very wide area of the valley below, as well as from the site of *35:Peristeriá*.

Digging or building the grave

It was noted above that the simpler graves in most cases exhibit a clear link between the construction of a grave and the interment of a specific corpse within, after which act the grave is closed and little else is observable archaeologically. With multiple burial monuments the relationship between a corpse and the architectural matrix within which it may be placed is not necessarily so specific, and may involve more complex conceptual and spatial relationships. The four tumulus sites under discussion here serve to illustrate these shifts of emphasis.

The construction of the mound is the first and greatest undertaking in the history of the monument, and will not be repeated on each funerary occasion: in fact, it is extremely unlikely to be associated with a funeral at all. The monument could be constructed *in anticipation* of future use, before any present need in the form of a corpse awaiting deposition. However,

without going into questionable estimates of person-hours required to build different structures, none of the monuments discussed here (with the possible exception of *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia* phase one) could have been built between the time of someone's death and their burial. Some sort of temporary burial would have been necessary during the construction period. *Architecturally* speaking, the mound is independent of any given burial, even if in *intention* it might have been so associated in the minds of its constructors.

There are architectural differences between each of these sites. *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia* exhibits two main construction phases. The meaning intended by the constructors of the first phase mound is enigmatic: the mound is small and low, and as far as it is understood at this moment, it was built as a casing around a large central cist, providing bulk and emphasis for it (**A1.*14*.13-18**). The mound seems not to have been intended to facilitate multiple burials and the (incomplete) evidence indicates that it was not so used. Inasmuch, therefore, as the first-phase mound was not used for multiple burials and (I would argue) was not intended to be so used, it is different from the others in its intention and meaning. The mound is simply emphatic on a central burial which provides the meaning for the mound (assuming, of course, that there was originally a burial in the central construction: it was empty when excavated).

The second phase of the mound (**A1.*14*.7, A1.*14*.9**) contrasts with the first in architecture and intention, but at the same time owes much to that original phase. The builders of the second phase mound chose not to create a new monument, but to use and transform what already existed. This indicates a clear link in their minds between their own project and their interpretation of already existing architecture. Their project transformed a small and low mound with an emphasis on a single, central burial space to a larger, higher mound intended to have a dispersed burial focus around the periphery, and intended to hold multiple graves. The enlargement of the mound effectively covered the central construction, although the eventual radial arrangement of pithoi did serve to emphasise the centre of the mound.

In creating a multiple-burial monument, the phase two architects took an already existing monument and transformed its meaning. Its first-phase meaning in large part was derived from the central construction, the focus of the monument: perhaps the burial place of a named individual, or closely defined group. The extension of the monument was intended to allow for that meaning to be extended, reinterpreting the central construction and adding new graves to the monument. In the act of transforming the structure in such a radical way (I would suggest that the transformation of a monument from a single tomb, perhaps of a named individual, to a multiple burial monument is radical) the architects did maintain a continuity: they extended the

monument by repeating its structure, and (assuming the stone capping was not covered by a final layer of earth) its final appearance - a mound with a flat stone paving - was modelled on the final appearance of the first-phase mound.

The other sites under consideration here are structurally single-phase monuments (excluding the tholos tomb phase at *17:Voïdhokiliá*). Although all of them are multiple-burial monuments, in some cases there seems a possibility that the meaning of a monument is partly derived from a central construction and that the architectural format was chosen in order to allow for this. The example of *27:Roútsi* Kaloyeropoúlou may be pertinent in this respect. The excavated parts of the mound show that a large, horseshoe-shaped pit with a ring of stones around the top was constructed in the centre of the monument (**A1.*27*.2-3**). Whether primary in sequence or not, the position of the pit at the centre and at the top of the mound makes it a focus for the monument as a whole. The pit is however small in comparison to the overall size of the mound, and it is unclear what, if anything, of it would normally be visible. The mound must have been planned from the first as a multiple burial monument.

The Kokorákou mound (*35:Peristeriá*) was also large (20m diameter), and this along with the fact that it was used for at least three pithos burials suggests that it was intended to be a multiple burial monument at the moment of its construction (**A1.*35*.8**). The excavation report does not allow us to discern whether it contained a 'first' or central burial, as suggested for *27:Roútsi* Kaloyeropoúlou and first-phase *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia*.

17:Voïdhokiliá (**A1.*17*.7, A1.*17*.9**), superficially similar to *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia*, is essentially a single-phase monument (excluding the later tholos tomb construction), although it seems to have been altered and remodelled in parts at different times, often in association with burial acts, thus making its construction difficult to interpret. One unanswered question concerning *17:Voïdhokiliá* is whether there was a central burial or central construction: unanswered because the later construction of an LHI tholos tomb in the mound destroyed and removed whatever there may have been in the middle of the mound. The respect shown by the builders of the tholos tomb for pithos burials in the mound (they exhumed and reburied those affected by tholos construction) suggests that similar respect would have been shown to a central construction if one had existed, though this need not have been the case, especially if the central construction were empty like that at *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia*. In any case, it is clear from its dimensions and evidence of use that *17:Voïdhokiliá* was intended as a multiple burial mound.

In summary, therefore, the construction of a mound is separated from an act of burial, and the builders of all of these monuments, save perhaps first-phase *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia*, set out to construct mounds open to multiple burial. It is possible that some mounds were constructed for a specific funeral and that the resultant grave occupied a central place in the mound, but in most cases this seems rather unlikely. The architectural intention of the builders was to create a raised space in the landscape, large enough to accommodate a number of burials (from two or three up to about thirty). The intention *may* also have included a focus on a central construction or grave created at the apex of the mound. Inasmuch as the architects may have set out to plan future use of the mound, in those mounds that exhibit radial pithos burials the pithoi, their bases to the centre, may have further served to emphasise the centre and apex of the mound.

The construction of individual graves within mounds may be seen as preserving the traditional act of grave construction for a specific funeral as exhibited in the simpler graves of the previous section. However, for many of the graves in these monuments, there is a more complex relationship between the creation of the grave and the interment of an individual, related more to the burial practices evidenced in the monuments of succeeding periods[1] than to a simple transfer of a burial traditions from the unmarked cemetery to a burial mound.

This is most clearly marked by the adoption of the use of burial pithoi in the mounds. Although one or two burial pithoi are known from the simpler graves, they were small and used for infant burial. The pithoi in consideration here are much larger (some over 2m in length: for example, **A1.*14*.21**) and used mainly for adult burial. Of the graves thought to be of MH date in these mounds[2], there are at least 27 pithoi, compared with five or perhaps nine or more[3] graves of cist or pit type.

Each time a new pithos was to be inserted in a given mound, a space of the correct size had to be created in the mound. In no case were pithoi inserted vertically in the mound: in fact, pithos cuttings were almost always made so that the pithos would rest horizontally. In a few cases pithos cuttings were made deep into mounds, but in most cases the cuttings were fairly shallow, suggesting that the pithoi would not be fully buried on insertion. To support the mouths of these pithoi, drystone constructions of flat stones were sometimes built up to and then around

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[1] Some of these monuments continue in use to at least MHIII, so indeed some of the burial practices evidenced in them date to that period.
[2] See catalogue entry 14 for discussion of the probably post-MH cist tombs of that mound.
[3] Five: assumes all cist burials in *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia* mound post-MH; nine: assumes cists 6, 9, 10 & 14 are MH, others post-MH; more than nine: assumes that many or all of the burials in *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia* are MH in date (maximum therefore 17 graves; under this unlikely hypothesis non-pithos burial is still rare at the other sites).

the neck, so that the mouth of the pithos would eventually seem to protrude from the mound, with a stone built façade (**A1.*14*.23**).

At *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia* the architecture of the second phase seems well suited to pithos burial. Each new pithos entailed the removal of the upper layer of stones and the earth underlying it, as far as the second layer of stones. This layer in most cases formed the bedding for the pithos (**A1.*14*.19**), the upper layer of earth and stones then surrounding the pithos; in most places however this layer seems to have been rather thin - it may have been thicker toward the periphery. Stones in some cases were clearly placed in contact with the pithos and ringing it, again bedding it. It is clear however that the pithoi were by no means fully buried within the upper layer, raising the question as to whether a further layer of earth was ever laid on top of the mound, or if individual pithoi might be covered by more earth or stones.

There is a number of graves with pebble floors: they are most numerous at *17:Voïdhokiliá*, where a multi-coloured sea-pebble bed was created for the corpse in pithos 6 and probably also in pithos 7; the burial in the grave just to the east of the later dromos lay on a pebble floor and was probably also covered in pebbles during interment; the two burials in a cist to the east of the mound also lay on a pebble floor; and finally the chamber of the later tholos tomb was also strewn with pebbles, although this is a secondary floor after the chamber was cleared (other tholos tombs with pebble floors are noted in the relevant section below). Other examples are found at *27:Roútsi*, where one of the cist tombs in the Kaloyeropoúlou mound had a pebble-strewn floor; and beyond the sites under immediate consideration, *35:Peristeriá*, where the MHIII-LHI grave beside the later tholos 1 peribolos had a thick pebble floor; and several graves at *57:Ayos Stéfanos*, *37:Málthi*, and *41:Filiatrá Stomion* (all described in the relevant section above). The effect of the pebbles is not immediately startling, but they form a subtle marker and interface with the earth, and an embellishment of the grave. A built grave, especially one located within an artificial monument, allows for the deposition of the corpse in a partly cultural environment, and the provision of a pebble floor might also have been intended to isolate the dead from natural earth.

Acts at the end of the construction phase

It is difficult to associate any excavated evidence with activities that may have taken place as an act of closure for the construction phase. A possibility is *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia* first phase, for example: although I generally assume that the central construction was a burial space and the lack of finds is explained by later removal, it is possible that no burial ever took place. If so,

then the feasting and sacrifice evidenced in front of the construction by an 'altar', ash and bones might relate to a post-construction action. The feasting and sacrifice are however more likely to relate to either post-funerary ritual or general ancestor worship activity.

The data and their interpretation with the central construction at *27:Roútsi* Kaloyeropoúlou are similar. Here the large central pit was also found empty, but outside were three pottery items, including a double cup. The cup at least may be plausibly interpreted as associated with ritual activity. Again, however, although it is possible that the activity relates to some act at the end of construction, the position of the remains outside the pit suggests that the activity took place with reference to the pit, and so is more likely to relate to post-funerary or general ancestor worship activity.

Opening the grave

The bedding of funerary pithoi, with the mouth at surface level, indicates that they were intended to be accessible. In most cases, opening the pithoi would involve simply removing the cover slab usually placed over the mouth and sometimes held in place by a drystone construction. It would not have been necessary to intervene in the mound itself. In the case of cist burials, whose dates are in any case uncertain, it would have been necessary to remove whatever covering stones were in place in order to gain access to the grave.

Closing the grave

There are no artefacts to be associated with the closure of these graves. Pithoi were regularly stopped by one or more stone slabs, placed up against the mouth and held in place by earth or drystone construction; sometimes such slabs were not found, and the mouth may simply have been covered with earth. The other graves seem to have been covered with earth for the most part, although the southern cist within the *17:Voïdhokiliá* mound may have had a wooden roof.

Preparation of construction materials

Many of these sites are noted as having 'cover slabs' as well as pithos fragments, the implication being that both pithos burial and cist burial was practised. These slabs are still visible at some of these unexcavated monuments (for example, *21:Léfki*, **A1.*21*.13-14**). Such slabs would need to be procured and brought to the site.

Some of the mounds are large, and consequently would have required the collection of a large amount of earth and stones to form the matrix.

Other acts before beginning

No evidence.

Digging or building the grave

Few of these mounds have been excavated, but where a mound has been damaged by farming or road-making activity, some structural details may have been observed. The mound at *2:Evangelismós* has been sectioned by the construction of a track: it appears to be almost entirely made of earth, with no other structural enhancements. At *6:Píla*, the mound was apparently made of stone and covered with 'hard white clay'. If so, given its position (described above), the white clay may well have been related to its visibility in the landscape (a rôle perhaps replicated by the stone paving of *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia*). One of the mounds at *15:Plátanos* may be partly stone built, although much of the visible stone is likely to be modern dump.

The mounds of the Ambelófito-Tragána ridge (*20:Tragána* & *21:Léfki*) are described as being from 2m up to 5m in height. These dimensions deserve careful consideration. If a burial mound is 2m in height, this means that if someone stands at the base that person must look upward in order to look at the centre of the mound - the mound is taller than a person. A mound 5m in height, however, is two and a half times as large again: a very tall construction indeed. By far the majority of Messenian mounds observed during fieldwork for this thesis were around 2m in height, and some are much lower. Rare exceptions might be *13:Kamínia*, 3.5m to 4m high, or mound 126 of *21:Léfki*, about 4m tall (3m according to the *Pylos Regional Archaeological*

Project: Alcock, Bennet & Davis 1996). There seems to have been a tendency for the *University of Minnesota Messenia Expedition* (McDonald & Hope Simpson 1961, 1964, 1969) to exaggerate the height of burial mounds, and the observation of lower heights now cannot be entirely explained by farming activities (a 5m mound is unlikely to be ploughed away to a 1m rump). This is partly confirmed by the published observations of the *Pylos Regional Archaeological Project* (*ibidem*).

The recent destruction of *22:Pírgos Tsoúka* has revealed that the mound was natural, although burials were dug into it quite deeply. This is an important observation: an existing knoll might just as well be utilised as a burial site as an artificial one, and ultimately the difference between those two categories might not be discernible to those using the mounds. (The observation is somewhat weakened, however, by the claim that the site relates only to the historical period: discussed and disputed in appendix three). A similar example is the Nikitopoúlou knoll at *30:Nihória*.

8:Kissós seems like a low, earthen construction (although its excavator suggests it is '3m or 4m high', it is certainly no more than 2m high as preserved today). The original form of the enigmatic stone structures ('grave periboloi') set within the mound is unknown, but they clearly create separate spaces within the body of the mound. In this sense they may play a similar rôle in the mound as pithoi and built stone chambers in other, similar mounds: specific and defined burial places to which people could return again and again.

Acts at the end of the construction phase

No evidence.

Opening the grave

These generally unexcavated mounds offer no new insights beyond those reported in the previous section.

Closing the grave

The often-reported 'cover slabs' are assumed to relate to the closure of cist graves by placing one or more slabs on top. In some cases these might have functioned as markers.

With the possible exception of Kokorákou at *35:Peristeriá*, all sites discussed as MHI-II (table 1.7, page 33) continued to be used in this period, and *8:Kissós* was also probably in use.

Preparation of construction materials

The material required in constructing many of the sites under consideration here is as great as, and often much greater than for those described in previous sections. Many sites are set in an artificial mound, as before requiring the gathering of earth and stone; moreover, in the case of sites where chambers are built of stone, there is need to procure, prepare and transport the stones involved. Most of the tholos tombs are built of squared, slab-like stones, which usually occur naturally but must at least have been gathered, if not quarried, and then brought to the point of construction. In some cases, for example *39:Psári Metsíki*, stones were derived from the immediate context surrounding the tomb. At *17:Voïdhokiliá* the stones were probably procured from the beach below. Elsewhere, stones may have been brought from some distance, and the location of the source is rarely determined by excavators. In the case of the larger tholoi, up to about 8m in diameter and perhaps 7m or more in height, the volume of material required is considerable. Even with the smaller tholoi, a not inconsiderable mass of stone would be required. A relatively large body of people, acting in a co-ordinated fashion, would be required in the procurement of materials for many of these tombs. This requirement continues in the construction phase, as noted below.

There is little evidence for dressed stonework at MHIII-LHI tholos tombs (stones in the stomion at *24:Englianós* tholos IV are dressed).

Two tomb types - the chamber tomb, and to a lesser extent the tholos tomb - provide evidence for the use of tools. The construction of chamber tombs demands the use of an axe- or pick-like device, as described below. Such an item would presumably have to be made of bronze, although perhaps the stone into which the *23:Volimídhia* tombs were cut was soft enough for a stone tool to carve (Iakovídhis suggests that the rock here was very soft and easy to cut: 1966, 98). Again at *23:Volimídhia* the chambers are often so well rounded and smooth that some other tool, perhaps a knife, must have been used to create the smooth sides. Tholos tombs are often at least partly underground, and so digging tools would be required.

Other acts before beginning

At *17:Voïdhokiliá* there was an unusual and complex preparatory phase for the second period of use for the mound. The first phase of the site consisted of a large burial tumulus containing burials in large pithoi generally placed radially in the mound. This phase of use probably began in MHI and continued through MHII with perhaps some further use in MHIII. By MHIII interventions in the mound seem sporadic at most, suggesting its status as a historical rather than current burial place. In early LHI this historical character was reworked by initiating a reconstruction (described below). In preparation for this the builders rearranged the mound, exhuming those pithoi likely to be affected by the new construction and reburying them around the periphery of the mound. Up to four of the nine funerary pithoi seem to have been treated in this way (numbers 1, 5, 7, 10). The evidence for this activity in two cases is that the pithoi were buried high in the mound, above MH levels in a layer created during the construction of the tholos tomb; in one case that all the material within had gathered at the bottom of the pithos, as if it had been momentarily set upright before being laid down again; and in one case that the pithos was placed on a bed of stones, unlike the other pithoi. Certainly in the first two cases at least the observation must be valid: we therefore have evidence that the builders of the second phase mound were at some pains to preserve intact the physical remnants of the activities of those who came before them. Despite changes in architecture and funerary practice, the second phase builders clearly felt that their acts in some sense maintained a continuity and link with the past and the acts of those that came before them.

At *39:Psári* there is evidence for activities preceding the construction of the tholos tomb, in that when the artificial floor of the tomb was excavated remains of fire-blackened earth were discovered underneath, along with flint and obsidian waste characteristic of the site. Two possible interpretations suggest themselves: either the tomb was built in a previously inhabited area, perhaps an area associated with flint and obsidian working, and that in levelling the area and creating the floor of the tomb charcoal and stone working waste were concentrated in the limestone hollows under the floor; or that a specific activity preparatory to the construction of the tomb left behind charcoal and stone working waste which was deliberately gathered under the floor as a foundation deposit.

Digging or building the grave

The architectures of MH burial mounds, while on occasion betraying considerable complexity (the multiple layers of *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia*), nonetheless amount to more or less carefully

constructed piles of earth or earth and stones, with grave structures such as cists, equally non-specialist in their construction. The only evidence of specialist skills lay in the use of funerary pithoi, and as it will be concluded that in most cases these were reused from another context (chapter seven), the special skills required for their construction should probably not be related directly to the acts of construction for the burial.

In the case of the sites under discussion here, various structures and techniques require the active presence of skilled workers and experienced specialists at the construction site: in particular the construction of tholos burial chambers on the principle of corbelled stone vaults (*7:Dhiódhia & Stréfi, 10:Gouvalári, 13:Kamínia, 16:Korifásio, 17:Voïdhokiliá, 24:Englianós, 27:Roútsi, 30:Nihória, 32:Paleohória, 35:Peristeriá, 39:Psári, 43:Káto Samikó Klidhí* and possibly *46:Makrísia*), and the carving of a chamber from rock (*23:Volimídhia, 58:Epídhavros Limirá* and *62:Kíthira*). At some sites, tholos tomb structures post-date an earlier phase of use within the MHIII-LHI bracket: *13:Kamínia, 17:Voïdhokiliá,* and possibly *10:Gouvalári.*

The recognition of two principal types obscures the high degree of architectural variability in these monuments. In many cases the life history of a monument, or of a group of monuments, had a profound effect on the form of an MHIII-LHI construction. Nonetheless the two basic forms, the corbelled stone built chamber and its carved equivalent, seem to appear suddenly and widely in the record, and not only in the area under study (although definite LHI examples outside this area are few: only the Thorikós elliptical tholos, and some chamber tombs at Prósimna, Náfplio and Mycenae).

The origins of the tholos form. In considering a possible 'external' origin for the tholos form, two possible levels of influence must be examined: were tholos tombs directly imported or adapted from elsewhere, or did the existence of similar tombs elsewhere form an influence on the adoption of the tholos form? These questions are important because, if tholos tombs were an adaptation of a Minoan form (the view comprehensively set forth by Hood: 1960, and supported by Pelon: 1976, 442-53), then questions concerning the construction of these tombs would revolve around the means by which Cretan skills and techniques were transferred to the mainland; if not, then evidence for the inception of the form, and the techniques required to create it, need be sought in the Messenian evidence.

Site		Tomb	Diameter	Setting	Masonry
7	Dhiodia		4.2m	Unknown	Unknown
10	Gouvalári	Gouvalári 1	6.25m	Mound, double	Flat stones (some large)
10	Gouvalári	Gouvalári 2	5m	Mound, double	Flat stones
10	Gouvalári	Mound 2 tholos	2.75m	Mound, multiple	Flat stones
10	Gouvalári	Mound 2 tholos	<3m	Mound, multiple	Flat stones
10	Gouvalári	Mound 2 tholos	<3m	Mound, multiple	Flat stones
10	Gouvalári	Mound B	3m to 4m	Mound	Flat stones
10	Gouvalári	Mound A tholos 1	2.9m	Mound, multiple	Flat stones
10	Gouvalári	Mound A tholos 2	3.05m	Mound, multiple	Flat stones
10	Gouvalári	Mound A tholos 3	1.55m	Mound, multiple	Flat stones
10	Gouvalári	Mound A tholos 4	3.5m	Mound, multiple	Flat stones
10	Gouvalári	Mound A tholos 5	2.1m to 2.8m	Mound, multiple	Flat stones
10	Gouvalári	Mound A tholos 6	3.48m	Mound, multiple	Flat stones
10	Gouvalári	Mound A tholos 7	3.5m	Mound, multiple	Flat stones
10	Gouvalári	Mound A tholos 8	3.6m	Mound, multiple	Flat stones
10	Gouvalári	Mound A tholos 9	3m	Mound, multiple	Flat stones
10	Gouvalári	Mound A tholos 10	4.73m	Mound, multiple	Flat stones
13	Kamínia	Tholos 1	3.2m to 3.4m	Mound, multiple	Flat stones
13	Kamínia	Tholos 2	2.7m	Mound, multiple	Flat stones
13	Kamínia	Tholos 3	2.5m	Mound, multiple	Flat stones
13	Kamínia	Tholos 4	2.7m	Mound, multiple	Flat stones
13	Kamínia	Tholos 5	2.1m	Mound, multiple	Flat stones
16	Korifásio		6m	Underground	Flat stones
17	Voïdhokiliá	Tholos	4.93m to 5.03m	Mound/protruding with clay coating	Large pebbles, sandstones
24	Englianós	Vayenás (tholos 5)	5.4m	Mound?	Flat stones
24	Englianós	Tholos IV	9.35m	Mound	Large, squarish, partly dressed stones
27	Roútsi	Tholos 1	5.4m	Underground	Flat stones
27	Roútsi	Tholos 2	5m	Underground	Flat stones
30	Nihória	Nikitopoúlou 2	3m	Knoll, multiple	Flat stones
30	Nihória	Nikitopoúlou 3	3.4m	Knoll/mound?	Flat stones
30	Nihória	Nikitopoúlou 4	3.4m	Knoll, multiple	Flat stones
30	Nihória	Nikitopoúlou 5	5.2m	Knoll, multiple	Flat stones
30	Nihória	Nikitopoúlou 6	3m	Knoll, multiple	Flat stones
30	Nihória	Veves	5.1m	Unknown	Flat stones
35	Peristeriá	Tholos 3	6.9m	Mound?/hillside	Flat stones
35	Peristeriá	South Tholos 1	5.08m	Freestanding with clay coating (?) (/Mound?)	Large pebbles
39	Psári Metsíki	Tholos 1	8.05m	Mound	Large squarish stones, partly dressed
42	Káto Samikó Klidhí[4]	Samikon mound	5.5m	Mound	Flat stones?
42	Káto Samikó Klidhí	Mound 5	5.65m	Underground/ mound	Large rough limestones
46	Makrísia[5]		3.8m	Mound?	Flat stones
51	Análipsis	Eight small tholoi	unknown	Unknown	Flat stones?

Table 6.2. Sizes, settings and construction materials of MHIII-LHI tholos tombs.

[4] Not published as a tholos tomb: refer to site catalogue entry.
[5] Not published as a tholos tomb: refer to site catalogue entry.

The first mainland tholos tombs were built in Messinía in MHIII: there is no evidence that any tholos tomb precedes this period. Minoan tholos tombs, although principally an artefact of the early Minoan period, continued to be used sporadically in the middle Minoan period and beyond, and some few examples were built in that period. Minoan tholoi differ in many details of architecture from their Mycenaean counterparts, but the debate has tended to focus on the corbelled vault, which is an essential feature of Mycenaean tholos tombs. It is certain that the vast majority of Cretan tholoi were never vaulted, as has been shown by Cavanagh & Laxton (1981, 131-133). The recent publication of the Minoan cemetery at Fourní (Arhánes) has however suggested that the three Minoan-type tholoi there were supplied with corbelled roofs, along with the two later Mycenaean-type tholoi and 'burial building 19' (Sakellarakis & Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1997, 243). The main description of tholos B (*ibidem*, 171-173) does not mention the roofing system, however, and there is little evidence of an incline in the preserved courses of the walls. Similarly the roof of tholos E is not described, and in fact the tomb is preserved only in one or two courses; 'burial building 19' is an apsidal structure, and only partial corbelling is claimed. It is therefore only tholos C (**A4.15**) that is clearly claimed to be vaulted (*ibidem* 181). This is an EMIII construction; even should one accept it as a vaulted building, its date of construction is so remote (over 300 years) from that of the first mainland tholoi that the knowledge deployed in its construction cannot be shown to be still current at that later date.

The tholos tomb at Kamilári (Levi 1962) is said to have been constructed in the MMI period (equivalent to MHI or early MHII: table 6.4 below). This tomb's construction is therefore an event closer in time to the construction of the earliest mainland tholoi, although there is still a considerable gap in time. Despite a claimed slight corbelling in the surviving walls and a quantity of stone removed during excavation (**A4.16**), it remains doubtful that the tomb could have been corbelled (compare the collapsed vault and mound of 35:*Peristeriá* tholos 1: **A1.*35*.63**). Founded on bare bedrock, a massive tumulus would have been necessary to retain the 7.65m diameter chamber, of which there is not the least trace.

The reasons against *direct* adaptation of the Minoan tholos in Messinía are strong in themselves:

- there is a significant chronological gap between known MM tholoi and the first MHIII tholoi;
- the two architectures are very different, especially in roofing and in entranceways.

These objections were deduced from considering the Minoan evidence. However, the Messenian evidence suggests equally strong objections to the *direct* adaptation of the Minoan tholos. If one

believes that tholoi were introduced from Crete, then the question of transfer of skills is straightforward: Cretan masters taught the Messenians all they knew. Moreover, if one believes that the tholos form was imported fully formed from Crete, this would explain the early appearance of relatively large tholoi like *16:Korifásio* with smaller tholoi; indeed, the smaller tholoi might be seen as the pale imitations by lesser architects of the Cretan originals they struggled to reproduce.

However, a closer examination of the architecture of the earliest tholos tombs shows not only that they differ significantly from Cretan tombs, but also that in many cases they can be seen to be rooted in existing funerary forms and practices. Among securely MHIII tholos tombs[6], only Vayená (*24:Englianós*, **A1.*24*.22**) might be argued to be freestanding: however the complete destruction of part of the tomb, and razing of the rest of it down to the bottom 30cm, means that it could just as easily have been a canonical mainland tholos set in a mound, both being destroyed at the same time. Other MHIII tombs are *16:Korifásio*, set almost completely underground (**A1.*16*.1-3**), one of the larger tholoi at *10:Gouvalári* (**A1.*10*.45**), set in a mound, and small tholoi in mounds at *10:Gouvalári* (**A1.*10*.1**) and *13:Kamínia* (**A1.*13*.1-4**), and in a knoll at *30:Nihória* (**A1.*30*.15**). None of these tombs is freestanding, and most are small (2m to 4m diameter) and set in mounds.

In the central Messenian *milieu* of funerary mounds, a freestanding stone-built structure would certainly be an alien form; on the other hand, a mound containing one or more built burial chambers would follow in an already established tradition of multiple burial spaces within funerary monuments. Considered from this point of view, there is therefore a clear line of development in the architecture of burial monuments in Messinía. Rather than viewing the tholos structure in isolation as an exceptional development, it can be viewed in its initial form as simply another way of creating a burial space within the context of the funerary mound. Only after the construction of a number of such small tholoi within mounds did the impetus come into being for the tholos to be made on a larger scale and ultimately to form the single usable burial space of a funerary monument.

Korrés (1996) has perceptively suggested that in form the small tholos tombs are similar to pithoi, and that the pithos may have suggested the shape of the tholos tomb. In particular the

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[6] The chronological uncertainty that attends the construction date of *any* tholos tomb means that there will never be a reliable way of producing a chronological sequence for these monuments that is anything better than a best guess. Another possible MHIII tholos tomb (not freestanding) is *35:Peristerá* tholos 3: refer to the catalogue entry, appendix one, for details.

pithos exhibits the qualities of possessing a darkened inner chamber approached through a narrow opening. These qualities are recreated in stone in the tholos tomb. The tholos construction goes beyond other types of burial, however, in that it can itself *contain* less monumental forms: a tholos chamber might have pits or cists in its floor, or (rarely) contain pithos burials. At *13:Kamínia*, two pithoi were built into the fabric of a tholos tomb: these two pithoi may well have been disturbed during the construction of the tholos, and were carefully exhumed and then set into the architecture of the tholos in a symbol of continuity, their content perhaps even being reburied in the tholos.

Whether or not any conceptual link existed between small tholoi and burial pithoi, they shared setting (a funerary mound), function, and numerous aspects of the funerary customs of the period. It seems reasonable therefore to posit their local development, rather than to adduce the *deus ex machina* of Cretan tholoi in order to explain the appearance of these monuments.

Tholos tomb construction techniques. The technique of building a corbelled vault in stone is complex, and has been thoroughly discussed by Cavanagh & Laxton (1981). Their work examines in great detail the principles of constructing a dome using the corbelling technique, and the theory they present compares favourably with measurements from existing tombs. In conclusion they suggest a construction method which should have been open to the Mycenaeans.

Cavanagh & Laxton's work did not set out explicitly to examine the invention or discovery of tholos building techniques. They examined tombs in the range of about 7m diameter (Marathóna) up to about 14m (Mycenae, Treasury of Atreus); the earliest tombs in Messinía range from about 2m diameter up to about 6m for the *16:Korifásio* tholos. Since the corbelled vault of the tholos tomb has no known predecessor, the technique must have been invented through trial and error, and so it makes sense that the earliest tholoi would be of manageable dimensions: easier to rebuild if a mistake caused a collapse, and safer for those involved. The suggestion made above that early tholoi set out to create burial spaces within mounds in much the same way as pithoi or other grave types implies the construction of relatively small tombs (the length of the largest known burial pithos, 2.18m from *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia*, is in the range of the diameters of early tholos tombs).

Having perfected the technique of corbelling for small tombs, the possibility of building larger tholoi seems to have suggested itself to Messenian architects almost immediately, so that at least three tholoi of 5m to 6m diameter had been built by the end of MHIII. While the construction

technique and skills required to build larger tombs are basically the same as for smaller tombs, it is important to grasp the different scales involved. A 6m diameter tholos tomb is not twice the size of a 3m diameter tholos tomb: both in terms of volume and floor surface (in human terms, the amount of space inside) and the surface area of the walls (hence the amount of construction material required and the area over which architectural control must be maintained during construction), the 6m tomb is much larger than the 3m tomb: approximately eight times larger in volume and four times larger in floor and wall surface area (table 6.3 below). Moreover, for larger tombs thicker walls are required, increasing the amount of construction material even further.

Diameter (m)	surface of floor (m^2)	surface area of walls (m^2)	volume (m^3)
1	0.79	1.57	0.26
2	3.14	6.28	2.09
3	7.07	14.14	7.07
4	12.57	25.13	16.76
5	19.63	39.27	32.72
6	28.27	56.55	56.55
7	38.48	76.97	89.80
8	50.27	100.53	134.04
9	63.62	127.23	190.85
10	78.54	157.08	261.80
11	95.03	190.07	348.46
12	113.10	226.19	452.39
13	132.73	265.46	575.17
14	153.94	307.88	718.38
15	176.71	353.43	883.57

Table 6.3. Approximations of floor and wall surface area and volume for tholos and chamber tombs of 1m to 15m diameter. The approximation assumes that the chamber is a perfect hemisphere and the floor is circular; in practice the height of the chamber is much greater than the radius, but the intention is to illustrate differences in scale. Area of circle: πr^2. Surface area of hemisphere: $2\pi r^2$. Volume of hemisphere: $^2/_3\pi r^3$.

Therefore, for two basic reasons I suggest that the smaller tholoi were built before the larger tholoi in central Messinía. On the one hand, there is a technological reason: there is no strong evidence that the technique of creating corbelled structures was directly imported from Crete or elsewhere. It must have been invented by trial and error, a process made much easier by trying to construct smaller rather than larger buildings in the first instance. On the other hand, the small tholos tombs seem clearly to be part of, and advance, the already existing structures and traditions of burial in tumuli. They can be seen to fulfil the rôle of creating a burial space within the mound, and to do so in ways not unconnected with other methods. At the same time, the tholos construction created new possibilities, which seem to have been very quickly understood and exploited.

Secondary adaptation of the tholos form. To conceive of these tholoi as merely another way of creating burial spaces within tumuli is probably to underplay the importance placed on them once they were created, but it does make the point that the tholos form continued to fulfil the need for various discrete burial spaces within a mound. The early examples do suggest, however, that once the ability and will to build tholoi was established, this form began to eclipse other possibilities. In the *13:Kamínia* mound, earlier ways of making room for the dead in tumuli, in the form of pithos burials, were superseded, while at the *10:Gouvalári* mounds, other burial forms have not been found; and slightly later at *17:Voïdhokiliá*, where a continuing feeling of understanding for the monument and connection to the dead led to the exhumation and redeposition of some of the funerary pithoi, in the process of constructing an LHI tholos tomb: the tholos, however, became the only possible burial space within the mound from that point onward.

Since in their initial construction tholoi were envisaged as facilitating the use of burial mounds, as a way of somehow making the ritual of mound use somehow *better*, they were not *intended* by their makers to replace the burial mound and create a new category of burial monument. Yet this quickly became the unintended consequence of the creation of the first tholos tombs; tholoi were quickly adopted and adapted so that by the end of the period (MHIII-LHI) the construction of larger tholoi in their own mounds was normal.

The chronological evidence shows that the appearance of larger tholoi was not the result of the gradual construction of ever larger tholoi, the largest ones being the culmination of a process; rather, the evidence of early date suggests that large tholoi were built very quickly after the first tholos tombs. Whatever the exact sequence, it is clear that these larger tholoi, along with others regarded as early LHI, were being built within the same chronological horizon as the smaller tholoi.

As has been noted, the difference between smaller and larger tholoi is not one of construction technique, but of scale. The same construction material is used in early 5m - 6m tholoi as in the small tholoi (that is, mainly flat slabs of schist and sometimes more variable, rounded stones), and the difference is simply one of scale. However, this increase in scale brought about the *secondary adaptation* of the tholos tomb, making it not one burial place among many in a funerary monument, but rather the only[7] burial place, often with multiple burial spaces *within it*,

[7] In fact many Messenian tholos tombs are found in pairs, either in two mounds or occasionally sharing the same mound. This observation does not detract from the fact of the tholos becoming the architectural focus of the mound.

in the form of pits and cists. The mound often retained its prominent rôle in the landscape, but attention was directed at the built architecture within the mound (architectural focus is discussed in chapter eight), and tholos mounds seem never to have become a focus for burial outside the tholos tomb itself. Underground tholos tombs were the result of the same process of secondary adaptation, and in this case dispensed with the mound altogether. These adaptations can be seen as both themselves subservient to changes in burial tradition, in how people wanted and expected to be able to use funerary structures, and bringing about changes in burial tradition.

There is no discernible development in the architecture of tholos tombs in the LHI period after their initial, rapid development in MHIII. Small tholos tombs in multiple burial mounds continued to be built and used, but as far as the evidence allows no *new* multiple burial mound was constructed in LHI, in Messinía at least[8], while many new tholos tombs of the larger variety *were* built in this period. There is a remarkable homogeneity in construction technique for these tholos tombs, and almost all fall within the 5m to 7m diameter bracket (the exceptions are *46:Makrísia*, 3.8m; *39:Psári*, 8.05m; and *24:Englianós* tholos IV, 9.35m).

Architectural details. Most tholoi were built into a mound, often partly underground. Only a very few examples were built completely underground, suggesting that the mound retained ongoing importance as a physical marker of the tomb's presence in the landscape; the construction of an underground tholos also required a very considerable excavation. Although in most cases the mound will have covered the tholos tomb, there is evidence in a few cases that the upper part of the vault protruded above the mound and was covered by a clay capping. One such example is *17:Voïdhokiliá*: the original MH mound, about 1m high, was increased around the tholos to at least 2m, and probably higher; the remaining clay-capped apex would have formed a white, pointed marker above the mound. The mound was removed in front of the stomion (there was no dromos), thus emphasising the blocked façade with the protruding apex behind it and the MH mound sloping down on both sides. A clay capping was also present at *35:Peristeriá* south tholos 1, and probably at some other early tholos tombs (evidence for a clay capping is easily missed in excavation).

Many of the *10:Gouvalári* tombs lack (or apparently lack) dromoi: the same is true for some of those at *13:Kamínia*. An explanation for this is that in the first case many small tholoi were sited relatively high and to the edge of their respective mounds, rather than deep in the centre: this is a result of the continuing idea of multiple burial points around the outside of the mound. In

[8] The eight small tholoi at *51:Análipsis* may date to LHI, but there is no evidence that they were located in a burial mound.

these cases the stomia would open onto the edge of the mound, and when walled up the walling could present a façade and a visible marker for that tomb. The development of the dromos is part of the secondary adaptation of tholos tombs, and it perhaps first became an important architectural device in the case of chamber tombs (below). If the dromos is accepted as a secondary development, however, it is by no means late: in mound A at *10:Gouvalári*, for example, the tholos most obviously with a dromos, number 10, is most likely MHIII-LHI in date.

A number of tholos tombs exhibit an unusual feature in some or all of the dromos, stomion and chamber: an elongated double groove or pit or combination thereof. This feature is found at *10:Gouvalári* 1 & 2 (**A1.*10*.39**), *27:Roútsi* tholos 2 (**A1.*27*.17**) and *35:Peristeriá* tholos 3 (**A1.*35*.35-37**); it reappears in later tombs at *18:Tragána* (**A1.*18*.4**, **A1.*18*.7-8**, **A1.*18*.14**). This was occasionally in the past explained as a feature allowing for the entry of a cart (carrying the corpse) or a coffin into the tomb, but this explanation is untenable for a number of reasons (discussion and references in Korrés 1976a and – in connection with similar features in chamber tombs of the Argolid and Viotía - Åkerström 1986). On more than one occasion among the present sample, these features were associated with hoard of bronze or gold, and so the most likely explanation for them is that they relate to specific instances of deposition, not necessarily primary in the architectural sequence of the building. The instances (outside Messinía) studied by Åkerström (1986) also date to LHI-II; he suggested that the grooves maintained a linking channel between the chamber and the dromos whenever the stomion was blocked, to be used for libation or other 'offerings'. It should be noted, however, that this feature overall is very rare; pan-helladic explanations are unlikely to be adequate.

Pebble floors are also occasionally found in tholos tombs, as at *17:Voïdhokiliá* mentioned above, at *43:Káto Samikó Klidhí*, where the floor of the chamber was strewn with gravel, and in later tombs at *54:Vafió*, where Tsoúndas mentions a layer of pebbles on the floor of the dromos, and possibly the floor of the second tholos at *12:Fitiés*. Otherwise, the floors of tholos tombs are generally of packed earth.

The largest (diameter 9.35m) and most impressive of MHIII-LHI tholos tombs is *24:Englianós* tholos IV (**A1.*24*.11-15**). Aside from its monumentality, architectural refinements are few: construction techniques seem very much the same as for the other tholoi. Courses of stones present a smooth face in the interior and are quite well laid, but still consist of irregularly sized flattish stones. Only in the façade of the stomion are there signs of more elaborate work: stones are larger and squared, suggesting that they were dressed and fitted for their positioning; in

particular, there are large squared stones as corner pieces in the façade. Nonetheless, courses are still of irregular sizes, and the surviving lintel block seems to have been unworked.

Tholos 1 at *39:Psári Metsíki* (**A1.*39*.7-8**) is another large tomb (8.05m diameter), with large blocks in both chamber and stomion. The tholos is mostly above ground and surrounded by a large mound made of stone. Architecturally one might expect this tomb to be later than LHI, and the evidence for an early date is not fully published. The stomion is very long - 4.9m, while the dromos is 6m in length, reaching to the edge of the mound. The dromos was lined with stone, which is unique for this period, although its location in a stone mound makes this feature inevitable. The mound was retained by a peribolos, also unique for tombs of this date. The peribolos wall, aside from its practical function of retaining the mound over the tholos, forms part of a complex, multi-layered architecture within the mound. The peribolos also functions as a visible boundary between mound and not-mound. In short, the architectural design is well suited to its location, high in the mountains in a rocky area, but might also be said to exhibit many enhancements on the basic, central Messenian design, suggesting either a slightly later date or the result of simple local development.

Chamber tombs. The chamber tomb may at first seem rather different from the tholos tomb: it is not set in a mound, and it is hacked or carved out of rock rather than built of stone. Nonetheless, a number of other factors make chamber and tholos tombs extremely similar both architecturally and in terms of their use. In form the chamber tomb closely resembles the tholos tomb (for example, **A1.*24*.39**). It consists of the same three basic elements: chamber, stomion and dromos, although in general the stomia of chamber tombs are very undeveloped in comparison to tholos tomb stomia, and rarely of any great length, a restriction due mostly to the mode of construction. The tomb is located underground, usually on the slope of a ridge or hill, the dromos leading from the hillside into the hill to the depth of the tomb, ending at the façade which is formed of the rockface at the end of the dromos and the stomion carved out of it (for example, **A1.*25*.39** top right). The chamber is carved out of the rock underground.

In the wider helladic world and especially in the LHIII period, chamber morphologies are very variable, but in the sample considered here, limited to three early sites, there is much less variation. Tholos-like chambers, found in most of these tombs, are rare in later tombs, whose chambers range from sub-round to sub-rectangular in shape, and there are examples of extremely neatly carved rectangular chambers (for example at Dhendhrá in the Argolid, Persson 1942).

In Messinía, in the same central area where many early tholos tombs are located, at *23:Volimídhia*, there is a chamber tomb cemetery of at least 34 tombs, dug underground but into extremely slight slopes. The slight slope is not the only unusual feature of the cemetery, since the tombs almost without exception have extremely neatly carved, circular chambers (for example, **A1.*23*.12, A1.*23*.19, A1.*23*.32, A1.*23*.39**), which make clear reference to the form of the early tholos tomb, exemplified nearby at, for example, *24:Englianós* (Iakovídhis 1966; Kontorli-Papadopoulou 1987, 145-146). The sizes of the chambers mirror those of the early tholos tombs, generally 3m to 5m in diameter, rising to 6m in a few cases. Stomia are not deep (long), and are usually low in height, up to about 1.5m high; dromoi are usually short but steep, occasionally stepped. Some of the tombs had second, smaller chambers opening off the dromos to the left about half-way down; clearly secondary constructions, and perhaps in some cases post-bronze age in date. Originally thought to be located in distinct groupings, it is clear that they are fairly evenly spread, although in places tombs have been built one next to the other, in a cluster or line (above, pages 122-123).

Tombs at *58:Epídhavros Limirá* are similar in shape: short, stepped dromoi, short stomia, and in this case elliptical chambers, still imitating tholoi (**A1.*58*.3**). The tombs have side chambers off the left side of the dromos, of similar size to the main chambers. Where dimensions are recorded, these are rather small in all features, so that chambers are of the order of 2m to 3m in diameter, stomia low, and dromoi 1.5m long. These tombs are more canonically set into the sides of a ridge.

The chamber tombs on *62:Kíthira* include both artificial chambers and natural chambers adapted for burial use (**A1.*62*.2**). The rock-cut chamber tombs differ from the two mainland sites in that most of them had more than one side chamber, and these led off from the central chamber rather than from the side of the dromos. Otherwise architectural details are similar: chambers are roughly sub-round, dromoi are short and often stepped, and overall dimensions are rather small, closer to the *58:Epídhavros Limirá* examples than those at *23:Volimídhia*. The largest example has a central chamber about 2.5m square and 2m high, with six smaller side chambers (**A1.*62*.7**).

The development of chamber tombs. Differences in architecture between these three sites, as well as differences with contemporary tholos tombs, suggest different lines of development and, ultimately, that the purposes for which the tombs were designed were slightly different.

By the time of the construction of the first *23:Volimídhia* tombs, either late MHIII or early LHI, the idea of the tholos tomb was becoming established. The chambers of *23:Volimídhia* tombs are closely comparable with nearby tholos tombs in shape and dimensions (Iakovídhis 1966). Differences are to be found in entrances: In many small tholos tombs, the dromos is undeveloped or completely absent, so that the stomion acts as the tomb's external interface. For tholoi in burial mounds, this suggests a line of walled-up tomb façades set radially in a mound. The chamber tombs at *23:Volimídhia* all feature dromoi (technologically necessary for a tomb buried 2m underground) but the stomion is reduced to a simple door in the rock façade, normally walled up.

Where the dromos is insubstantial, there is opportunity for those around the tomb to focus on the façade from a wider arc: activities at the façade are visible and open to a wider potential audience. This fits well with earlier traditions at multiple burial mounds, and insubstantial dromoi at larger tholos tombs may relate to the same factors. Where the dromos is short and steep, as at *23:Volimídhia*, fewer people can form an audience for activities at the façade, which will in any case be circumscribed by the narrow width of the dromos. Hence the end of the dromos may well have become a focus for activity, for acts performed before entering and after leaving the tomb: the liminal point, with the dromos itself, descending to the chamber, forming the passage from one area to the other. This is the rôle taken on by the dromos in most tholos tombs (chapter eight), and the presumed short, steep dromos at *16:Korifásio* functioned in the same way. The development of dromoi in tholos tombs, a part of the secondary adaptation of tholos tombs, may have been strongly influenced by the construction, through necessity, of dromoi at the early *23:Volimídhia* chamber tombs and the *16:Korifásio* tholos tomb, and later in LHI in other tholos tombs such as *27:Roútsi*. In those cases, although the dromos was a necessity for underground tombs, the architectural properties of the dromos came to be appreciated so that more developed dromoi came to be a normal part of tholos tomb architecture, even where not strictly required; and in LHIIA the development of the dromos at some sites reached monumental proportions (*35:Peristeriá* tholoi 1 & 2; *54:Vafió*).

The principal difference between the *23:Volimídhia* tombs and the *58:Epídhavros Limirá* & *62:Kíthira* examples is one of scale. While the *23:Volimídhia* tombs are generally 3m to 4m in diameter, and some are larger, the *58:Epídhavros Limirá* and *62:Kíthira* tombs are about 2m to 3m in diameter and low in height. The *23:Volimídhia* tombs are in scale equal to many tholos tombs in their vicinity. The *58:Epídhavros Limirá* tombs, isolated from central Messinía, may have been built with the *62:Kíthira* examples in mind, or some of the early Argolid examples, rather than the *23:Volimídhia* cemetery. The difference in scale (table 6.3 above) is relevant in

terms of the number of people that might occupy the chamber and the scope of funerary activities that might take place within. The *58:Epídhavros Limirá* and *62:Kíthira* tombs were built with funerary practices involving fewer people in mind, and perhaps a need to keep the moment of interment or of entry into the tomb a highly restricted moment; the *23:Volimídhia* tombs allow for a number of people to enter the tomb at once and view or be involved in activities there. These differences, locally significant, and related to different trends in funerary architecture, do not obscure the basic equivalence of their architecture and their function as multiple burial monuments.

A different aspect serves to set the *62:Kíthira* tombs apart from most mainland examples of any period: the use of side chambers opening off the main chamber. The *23:Volimídhia* and *58:Epídhavros Limirá* examples sometimes have side chambers opening off the left of the dromos, which form alternative foci for the monuments, but are secondary to their construction (at least with the *23:Volimídhia* examples). With the *62:Kíthira* tombs the side chambers create a quite different architectural meaning for the tombs. The chamber is no longer the principal focus, the *point*, of the architecture; the chamber becomes a central gathering place with multiple radial foci, a zone of exchange from chamber to chamber. This may have considerable implications for an understanding of how people expected to be able to use the tombs: rather than the chamber being the focus of activity, it may have been secondary to more secluded rites in side chambers.

Overall, therefore, the architecture of these tombs is closely comparable to that of the tholos tomb, with the differences mentioned above. The differences are minor in comparison to the similarities; at *23:Volimídhia*, the tombs were almost certainly conceived as simply a different way of creating a tholos tomb, and while at *58:Epídhavros Limirá* and *62:Kíthira* the idea of the tholos tomb may have been less immediate (or even not present) in the minds of those building the tombs, their intentions in building the tombs were the same as for those building tholos tombs. In MHIII-LHI tholos and chamber tombs were understood through their common difference from other burial types: that they were closed off, circular vaulted underground (or under mound) chambers approached by low, narrow entrances and perhaps by wider dromoi.

Construction technique for chamber tombs. One aspect of chamber tombs little mentioned in the literature is construction technique. Skills involved in the construction of chamber tombs include the ability to recognise suitable rock or rock combinations, and a *practised* ability to carry out or organise the excavation and carving of the tomb. The construction of a chamber tomb would

have involved continual danger of the collapse of the mass of stone above as one worked to carve out the chamber from below.

That the dromos of a chamber tomb must be constructed first is both obvious (for the dromos provides the only access to the place where the chamber is to be carved) and shown by the numerous reports of dromoi abandoned because of a (presumed) unsuitability of the rock, discovered only once the cutting of the dromos had been carried out. Having constructed a dromos, the architect would presumably mark out the area of the entrance and begin to tunnel into that area. Once the 'tunnel' reached the point that was to be the end of the stomion and the edge of the chamber (usually less than 1m), the 'tunnel' would be widened to create the chamber. One possible method would be as follows: having decided on a diameter for the chamber, on reaching the point where the edge of the chamber was to be situated, the workers could dig forward to a distance equal to the planned radius of the tomb. At this point they would have effectively reached the middle of the chamber. Using a rope the length of the radius, they could dig around, making a circular chamber by digging only as far as the length of the rope. By this stage the chamber would exist in all its diameter and to the height of the stomion. Digging upward would be the most dangerous part in view of the possibility of collapse. Since the height of the chamber is rarely as much as the diameter of the floor, the carving of the quasi-hemispherical chamber's inner surface may have required more complicated calculations, although in practice it may simply have been achieved by eye. An alternative construction method might be to tunnel into the chamber as far as the centre, dig around to create half of the floor and at the same time dig upward thus creating the half of the chamber on the entrance side before digging out the other half.

The *23:Volimídhia* tombs are by far the best constructed of those under consideration here, and in fact are among the most careful constructions of any Mycenaean chamber tombs. In almost all of them great care was taken to create a circular chamber and a tholos-like vault. The *58:Epídhavros Limirá* tombs are more elliptical in shape, suggesting that the example of the tholos tomb was less immediate; chamber morphologies at *62:Kíthira* are more varied, and reflect a variability in chamber tomb shape common to Minoan and later Mycenaean examples - they also suggest a less precise method of construction.

The origin of the chamber tomb form. The earliest chamber tombs under consideration here are undoubtedly the *62:Kíthira* examples, which date to MMII at the earliest, and certainly MMIII-LMIA and later. The dating terminology refers to the find not of helladic but of Minoan material culture within the tombs. In fact, chamber tombs are known in Crete from many sites,

ranging chronologically from MMII-III to LMIIIC: not only are they in continuous use on Crete for the whole of their currency on the mainland, but also they both predate and outlast their mainland counterparts. At first glance this might suggest that mainland chamber tombs may well be Cretan offshoots, and no doubt contributes favourably to the argument that tholos tombs were also imported from Crete. Nevertheless, a closer look at the situation shows that the large majority of Cretan chamber tombs contain material of LMIII or later date: exactly the period when the rôles are supposed to be reversed and Crete has come under Mycenaean domination. In other words the majority of chamber tombs on Crete might be supposed to have been built under mainland influence.

Chamber tombs of the protopalatial and neopalatial periods are relatively few in number and, in terms of typology, form one minority type of funerary architecture among others. They seem to be more or less restricted to cemeteries near Knosós and modern Iráklio (Cadogan 1994, 62-63 and note 28). Hood & Smyth (1981, 11) note MMII chamber tombs in the Mávro Spíleo (**A4.19**) and 'Ailias' cemeteries, some continuing in use until LMI, while further tombs on Ano Yipsádhes (**A4.20**) were built in MMIII; the recently fully published chamber tomb ('1967') at Póros, at the other end of the Valley, can also be dated MMIII-LMI and other tombs are known from that vicinity (Muhly 1992; **A4.21**). There can be little doubt that the first chamber tombs at Knosós predate any mainland example.

The architecture of the early chamber tombs at Knosós[9] is far from stereotypical: tombs I (**A4.22**) and III at Mávro Spíleo, for example, were clearly of the 'normal' form, with dromos, stomion and chamber, the dromoi short and steep, chambers of sub-round or sub-rectangular plan and section; but most of the early tombs from this and the other cemeteries exhibit architectural peculiarities. Tomb IX at Mávro Spíleo, for example, had an entrance leading to an elongated chamber or corridor, with four tunnels leading off to other chambers. Many of the tombs were of the so-called 'kidney' shape, where a rounded chamber is interrupted opposite the entrance by a baulk left in the rock, thus forming two partly separated chambers; these can then be elaborated by deepening the chambers or adding niches, as for example at the early tombs V (**A4.23**) and VII (**A4.24**) at Mávro Spíleo, or tomb XVIII at Ano Yipsádhes (**A4.25**). The latter also had an ante-chamber, but little sign of a dromos. Other early tombs at Knosós include a cave used as a chamber tomb in the MMI-LMI period (Hood & Smyth 1981

[9] These are listed by Cadogan (1992, 62 note 28): up to six tombs at Ailias (unpublished; see Hood & Smyth: 1981, 54 site 257 for references); seven of the twenty tombs at Mávro Spíleo (Forsdyke 1927); one or possibly two tombs at Ano Yipsádhes (Hood *et alii* 1959); and the tombs at Póros (Muhly 1992). Other chamber tombs in the Knosós region, far greater in number, date to LMII-III and later.

45 site 140). Few, if any, chamber tombs of the MM period are known from elsewhere on Crete (none are listed in the index of Siriopoúlou's recent catalogue: 1995).

The coincidence in chronology, material culture content and architectural morphology between the Minoan tombs concentrated at Knosós and the tombs at *62:Kíthira* is therefore striking. Both modified natural rock holes and artificial chamber tombs were used at Kastrí, and the architectural features of the tombs as excavated correspond well with the Knosós examples, in particular the variability in chamber form and in the use of side chambers off a central chamber. The excavators of the *62:Kíthira* tombs described the chamber tombs as 'typical Minoan tombs' (Coldstream & Huxley 1972, 220). In fact, as we have seen, they are not typical, in that the Knosós tombs are unusual for this period, but they might be described as typical of Knossian MM chamber tombs[10].

The normal view of *62:Kíthira* Kastrí is that it was a Minoan colony (Coldstream & Huxley 1984 and discussion thereafter), and following that point of view one must suppose that the chamber tombs are an indication of a custom brought to the island by the Minoan colonists. Tentative dates for the Middle Minoan period as suggested by Manning (1995) correspond with the dates used in this thesis (chapter one) as follows:

Mainland phase	Calendar date BC	Minoan phase	Calendar date BC
MHI	2050/2000 – 1950/1900	MMIA	2050/2000 - 1925/1900
		MMIB	1925/1900 - 1900/1875
MHII	1950/1900 - 1750/1720	MMII	1900/1875 - 1750/1720
MHIII	1750/1720 - 1680	MMIIIA(-B)	1750/1720 - 1700/1680
		MMIIIB-LMIA	1700/1680 - 1675/1650
LHI	1680 - 1600/1580	LMIA	1675/1650 - 1600/1550
LHIIA	1600/1580 - 1520/1480	LMIB	1600/1550 - 1490/1470
LHIIB	1520/1480 - 1445/1415	LMII	1490/1470 - 1435/1405

Table 6.4. Chronological comparison of mainland and Cretan pottery styles for the period of study in this thesis. Source: mainland, Rutter 1993, 756 table 2; Crete, Manning 1995, 217.

The earliest of the Knosós tombs therefore correspond with mainland MHII, probably continuing to MHIII-LHI, while the main use of the *62:Kíthira* tombs corresponds to mainland MHIII-LHI, and certainly the earlier phase of that period. We can therefore discount the possibility that the chamber tomb form on Kíthira was derived from the mainland, and must assume that if there was any type of influence, it flowed from Kíthira to the mainland (Pini 1968, 41).

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[10] In terms of burial practices, there are some differences: larnakes were not noted in the *62:Kíthira* tombs.

There are close similarities among all of these sites, mainland, Kithiran and Cretan, but there are also significant differences. An explanation for the first construction of the chamber tomb at *58:Epídhavros Limirá*, at *23:Volimídhia* and in the Argolid is not evident from the mere acknowledgement of the earlier construction of the *62:Kíthira* tombs. Was the existence of the *62:Kíthira* chamber tombs (or indeed the Knosós chamber tombs) a factor in the inception of individual mainland chamber tomb cemeteries? If so, how did the builders and users of each mainland chamber tomb cemetery understand and employ their knowledge of the Kithiran (or Knossian) tombs?

There is no direct answer to these questions. The three cemeteries may share a common architectural form, but there is enough variety in how that form was produced at each site to show that the influence of the Kithiran and Knossian tombs was indirect, perhaps minimal. The tombs at *23:Volimídhia* owe much more to tholos monuments in the vicinity than to distant Crete or Kíthira; but the degree of Cretan background influence in Messinía, in the sense that Cretan artefacts were found in tombs such as *24:Englianós* Vayená, or the adaptation at this time of Cretan pottery forms into the LHI style, make it possible that an experience or knowledge of tombs at Knosós or on Kíthira played some part in the foundation of the *23:Volimídhia* cemetery. The *58:Epídhavros Limirá* tombs, conversely, are not set in a landscape of recently constructed tholos tombs. They are the first known Mycenaean tombs in their region, and are closer in form to the Kithiran tombs than the Messenian examples. Their construction must have satisfied a perceived need of their users, a combination of a desire to build tombs that consisted of dromos, stomion and chamber, the canonical form, yet which was perhaps more informed through direct experience of Kithiran architecture than of either Messenian or, possibly, Argolic examples. While both cemeteries at *23:Volimídhia* and *58:Epídhavros Limirá* built single- rather than multiple-chamber tombs, a conformity almost universal in the mainland for the whole Mycenaean period and for thousands of tombs (Dickinson 1983, 57), the side chambers of the Kithiran tombs were transformed at *58:Epídhavros Limirá* into side chambers off the dromos, and at *23:Volimídhia* the numerous floor-level niches in most tombs, providing space for collected bones to be deposited, echo distantly the side chambers of Crete and *62:Kíthira*.

The appearance of the chamber tomb, then, in the southern and southwestern Peloponnese, was not merely the direct result of contact with the Minoan world, nor did it simply answer the need for a less elaborate form of burial for a suddenly formed middle class. These tombs in the MHIII-LHI period are a rarity, limited to three known sites within the study area and very few elsewhere. The tombs of *62:Kíthira* owe their existence to a group of Cretan origin following

certain burial customs of contemporary Knosós. The tombs at *23:Volimídhia* came into being as a result of the development in central Messinía of a burial custom involving corbel-form chambers: the *23:Volimídhia* chamber tombs are a recreation of that burial custom in a different medium, but perhaps partly inspired by chamber tombs on Crete or *62:Kíthira*. The tombs at *58:Epídhavros Limirá*, fewer in number and isolated from other sites, seem to have come into being with the distant echoes of other cemeteries in mind, certainly *62:Kíthira*, but perhaps also the tholos tombs of Messinía and the chamber tombs in the Argolid at Mycenae, Náfplio and Prósimni.

Maintenance and dissemination of knowledge of construction techniques. Tholos building depends on certain architectural principles, and certain knowledges are required to put those principles into action effectively (Cavanagh & Laxton 1981). Construction depends on the presence of at least one proficient architect, someone who through experience knows how to place masonry so that the correct shape is formed and the tomb does not collapse. Although Cavanagh & Laxton show that this knowledge is not particularly obscure, it is also *not obvious* from merely knowing the shape of a tholos tomb. Specific skills are also required in chamber tomb construction. The question here is whether the architectural record suggests any means for the dissemination and maintenance of this knowledge.

There are various modes through which architectural knowledge might have been disseminated. One extreme would be relatively free dissemination, where little or no control was exerted over the core knowledge of construction, and given the right circumstances this knowledge could be acquired without difficulty by the representatives of almost any community or group. The other extreme would envisage a close control over the core knowledge of construction by a particular corporate group, or a small number of (competing?) corporate groups. In this case any individual, group or community seeking to construct a tomb would need to engage the services of one of these groups. Another alternative would see the core knowledge of construction maintained through numerous small corporate groups, these groups allowing relatively wide dissemination of the knowledge.

A number of factors can be examined. How specialised are the knowledges involved? Are they so specialised that a high degree of practical competence would always be required of the architect? Are there stereotypical or individualising elements in different tombs that might suggest the repetition of stock elements, experimentation, or the decisions of an architect only vaguely familiar with other examples? Are there any repeated elements that are structurally unnecessary?

Practical competency in chamber tomb construction would not necessarily be required in the LHIII period, when such tombs are numerous and the general principles of their construction would probably be generally known through observation, talk, and the practicalities of their construction in such numbers; but in the MHIII-LHI period, cemeteries are few and remote from each other. At each site the knowledge of construction must have been locally maintained and left largely unchanged, which is shown by the reproduction of tomb morphologies at each site.

Certain details of form at *23:Volimídhia* show that a very particular method of construction was employed and repeated time and again in the tombs at the site: the almost perfect circularity of the chambers and the shape of the vault, the smoothed surfaces of the walls, and especially the cone-shaped apices all suggest that not merely a general knowledge of how to build an underground chamber tomb was employed, but that particular and specific methodologies were used. This knowledge was local and not repeated elsewhere[11], but was clearly maintained throughout the period of construction of the tombs (MHIII-LHI-LHIIA and possibly longer: see catalogue entry). A specialist group of tomb builders (obviously not employed at such work full time) existed within the community of those using the *23:Volimídhia* tombs. This knowledge will have been maintained among them through practice and reproduced through time in tradition, just as any other traditional aspect of the funerary sphere.

Beyond basic construction technique, it is difficult to identify elements that might suggest the existence of specialist tholos tomb builders. Construction material for most MHIII-LHI tombs consists of small to medium flat stones; these stones, unworked, are usually locally-sourced and abundant, hardly an indication of specialism; moreover, as seen at *17:Voïdhokiliá*, other types of construction material may be used where available. Other elements that might indicate the presence of specialists, such as cut stone or 'advanced' features like the relieving triangle, are largely absent from these tombs[12]. One other feature, repeated but hardly universal, is the single or double groove or pit cut in the stomion and chamber of some of the tombs, discussed above (page 163); these features, where present, are not stereotypical, and need not relate to the construction of the tomb. In short, beyond the technique of corbelling and the basic architectural form of the tholos, there is nothing to suggest different architectural schools.

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[11] It is conceivable that a knowledge of the *23:Volimídhia* tombs was employed at *52:Pellána*.
[12] A relieving triangle is claimed for *27:Roútsi* tholos 1; there dressed stone in the stomion at *24:Englianós* tholos IV.

Nonetheless the evidence can sustain the view that tholos building was organised by a relatively restricted group of people. The appearance of the type in central Messinía and its rapid proliferation in that area, as well as the development of the technique in that area so that the first of the large tombs appear there[13], suggest strongly that in the first instance a single group was involved in organising these acts of construction. The appearance of these tombs elsewhere can then be ascribed to two factors: the movement of a practised architect or group to another area, and the desire among groups or communities in that area to sustain tholos building activity. This need not imply some kind of cultural unity between these areas, any more than one might believe in cultural unity between Messinía and Kíthira on the basis of chamber tombs in both areas; instead it implies a situation where a readiness existed to adopt these kinds of tombs. This readiness is the same as the readiness, for example, to adopt a form of Minoan pottery as LHI painted pottery.

Tholos tombs outside the core area in MHIII-LHI are however limited in number and distribution, suggesting that tomb builders did not travel widely. Early 'outlying' tholoi are to be found along the west Peloponnesian coastal strip: at *35:Peristeriá*, not far into the Soulíma valley; at *43:Káto Samikó Klidhí*, on the coast, and possibly at *46:Makrísia*, in the Alfeiós valley. It is tempting to suggest the first communities able to call on and harness tholos building expertise from central Messinía were those located on the coast and in contact with central Messinía through sea transport[14]. At the end of LHI and into LHIIA, this distribution pattern was maintained for the west, with numerous tombs appearing in the Soulíma valley, and at *44:Kakóvatos* on the Elean coast, but tombs built to the east were located inland (*51:Análipsis*, *54:Vafió*) as well as on the coast (*34:Kámbos*); the appearance of tholos tombs outside the study area is also an LHI/IIA phenomenon.

Careful study of the evidence therefore suggests that construction knowledge was restricted to a few people or groups for all of the MHIII-LHI period, and even in LHIIA that knowledge is likely to have been maintained among a relatively small number of regionally based groups of architects and tholos builders (below, pages 183-184).

The construction of graves within the tombs. Tholos and chamber tombs may exhibit a number of secondary architectural features associated with interment: pits, cists, niches, or side chambers. There is great variety in the number, placement, size and shape of these features, and since their

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[13] Both at the 5m to 6m diameter range, for example *16:Korifásio* in MHIII, and also the first of the really large tombs, *24:Englianos* at 9.35m diameter in LHI.
[14] It is perhaps relevant that the sole early tholos tomb outside the area, the elliptical tholos at Thorikós in Attikí, is also located on the coast (dated LHI/IIA).

construction is not necessarily related to the construction of the tomb, in many cases the features listed below will post-date the MHIII-LHI period. Material of earlier date than the construction of a secondary architectural feature may come to be associated with it (for example, the secondary burial of collected bones and artefacts in a newly created pit), or an earlier feature may be emptied out and a later inhumation placed in it.

Site		Tomb	Architectural features
7	Dhiódhia	Dhiódhia	Unknown
10	Gouvalári	Gouvalári 1	Elongated pit in stomion and chamber
10	Gouvalári	Gouvalári 2	Elongated pit in stomion continues as two furrows in chamber
10	Gouvalári	Mound 2 tholos	Unknown
10	Gouvalári	Mound 2 tholos	Unknown
10	Gouvalári	Mound 2 tholos	Unknown
10	Gouvalári	Mound B	Pit
10	Gouvalári	Mound A tholos 1	No feature
10	Gouvalári	Mound A tholos 2	Two pits
10	Gouvalári	Mound A tholos 3	No feature
10	Gouvalári	Mound A tholos 4	'Stone Π'; pits
10	Gouvalári	Mound A tholos 5	Pit
10	Gouvalári	Mound A tholos 6	Cist
10	Gouvalári	Mound A tholos 7	Unknown
10	Gouvalári	Mound A tholos 8	No feature
10	Gouvalári	Mound A tholos 9	Pit
10	Gouvalári	Mound A tholos 10	Two pits in layer above floor
13	Kamínia	Tholos 1	Unknown
13	Kamínia	Tholos 2	No feature
13	Kamínia	Tholos 3	Unknown
13	Kamínia	Tholos 4	No feature
13	Kamínia	Tholos 5	No feature
16	Korifásio		Unknown
17	Voïdhokiliá	Tholos	Cist
23	Volimídhia	Kefalóvriso 2	One or two pits; nine peripheral niches
23	Volimídhia	Kefalóvriso 3	Three pits; eight peripheral niches
23	Volimídhia	Kefalóvriso 4	Three pits
23	Volimídhia	Kefalóvriso 5	Pit and two peripheral niches
23	Volimídhia	Kefalóvriso 6	Two pits and three peripheral niches
23	Volimídhia	Kefalóvriso 7	Unknown
23	Volimídhia	Kefalóvriso A	Five pits and one peripheral niche
23	Volimídhia	Kefalóvriso B	Four pits and one peripheral niche
23	Volimídhia	Angelopoúlou 1	Two pits
23	Volimídhia	Angelopoúlou 2	Raised central strip in floor
23	Volimídhia	Angelopoúlou 4	Eight peripheral pits/niches
23	Volimídhia	Angelopoúlou 5	Unknown
23	Volimídhia	Angelopoúlou 6	Unknown
23	Volimídhia	Angelopoúlou 7	Unknown
23	Volimídhia	Angelopoúlou 8	Two niches
23	Volimídhia	Angelopoúlou 9	Unknown
23	Volimídhia	Angelopoúlou 10	Unknown
23	Volimídhia	Angelopoúlou 11	Pit in dromos, pit in chamber, eleven peripheral niches
23	Volimídhia	Mastoráki 1	Three pits and two peripheral niches
23	Volimídhia	Voriá 1	Pit and nine peripheral niches; pit in side chamber Voriá 1a
23	Volimídhia	Voriá 2	Pit and three peripheral niches

Site		Tomb	Architectural features
23	Volimídhia	Voriá 3	Five pits and one peripheral niche
23	Volimídhia	Voriá 4	Six pits and unknown number of peripheral niches
23	Volimídhia	Voriá 5	Two pits and six peripheral niches
23	Volimídhia	Voriá 6	Two pits
23	Volimídhia	Voriá 7	No feature
23	Volimídhia	Rigas	Five pits and four peripheral niches
23	Volimídhia	Koroníou 1	Unknown
23	Volimídhia	Koroníou 2	Unknown
23	Volimídhia	Koroníou 3	Three pits and seven peripheral niches
23	Volimídhia	Koroníou 4	Unknown
23	Volimídhia	Koroníou 5	Unknown
23	Volimídhia	Koroníou 6	Unknown; side chamber contained fourteen niches
24	Englianós	Vayenás (tholos 5)	Four pits
24	Englianós	Tholos IV	One pit, one built cist
27	Roútsi	Tholos 1	'Niche' in floor
27	Roútsi	Tholos 2	Two pits, secondary deepening of floor in chamber, stomion and dromos
30	Nihória	Nikitopoúlou 2	Unknown
30	Nihória	Nikitopoúlou 3	One pit
30	Nihória	Nikitopoúlou 4	One pit
30	Nihória	Nikitopoúlou 5	Unknown
30	Nihória	Nikitopoúlou 6	One pit
30	Nihória	Veves	One shallow pit
30	Nihória	Little circle	One pit
35	Peristeriá	Tholos 3	Elongated pit in chamber and stomion
35	Peristeriá	South Tholos 1	One pit
39	Psári Metsíki	Tholos 1	No feature
42	Káto Samikó Klidhí[15]	Samikon mound	Unknown
42	Káto Samikó Klidhí	Mound 5	Six pits
45	Makrísia[16]		One pit
58	Epídhavros Limirá	Ayia Triádha A	Three pits, perhaps more
58	Epídhavros Limirá	Ayia Triádha B	Four pits, one peripheral niche
58	Epídhavros Limirá	Ayia Triádha C	Unknown number of pits
58	Epídhavros Limirá	Vamvakiá	Unknown
58	Epídhavros Limirá	Paleókastro[17]	Unknown number of pits
51	Análipsis	Large tholos	Two pits
51	Análipsis	Eight small tholoi	Unknown
62	Kíthira	Staïs' tomb	One niche, one side chamber off main chamber
62	Kíthira: Kastrí	Tomb A	Three side chambers of main chamber
62	Kíthira: Kastrí	Tomb B	No chamber
62	Kíthira: Kastrí	Tomb C	Unknown
62	Kíthira: Kastrí	Tomb D	Three side chambers presumably opening off main chamber
62	Kíthira: Kastrí	Tomb E	Six side chambers off main chamber
62	Kíthira: Kastrí	Tomb F	No feature
62	Kíthira: Kastrí	Tomb G	No feature
62	Kíthira: Kastrí	Tomb H	Four side chambers off main chamber, two with one cist each (probably of the Roman period)
62	Kíthira: Kastrí	Tomb J	No feature
62	Kíthira	1977	Unknown

[15] Not published as a tholos tomb: refer to site catalogue entry.
[16] Not published as a tholos tomb: refer to site catalogue entry.
[17] More than one tomb.

Site		Tomb	Architectural features
62	Kíthira	1990	Three chambers

Table 6.5. Secondary architectural features such as pits, cists, side chambers, and niches. In many cases excavation or recording is incomplete: the list reflects only published information.

The few intact contexts of certain early date (mentioned above) show that tholos and chamber tombs were always regarded as places within which it was acceptable to inter in traditional ways, in pits, cists or pithoi, but at the same time that it was possible to inter on the floor. Continuous access to tombs over the years led to the creation of multiple pits, cists and niches as alternative locations for burial, or for the secondary burial of material collected from the floor. The *23:Volimídhia* chamber tombs, for example, contain numerous niches in which it became traditional to store the bones of earlier dead.

Acts at the end of the construction phase

The creation of furrows or a long pit in dromos, stomion and chamber at a few sites (*10:Gouvalári* 1 & 2; *27:Roútsi* 2, and *35:Peristeriá* 3) *might* be related to the end of the construction phase; the deposition of bronze or gold hoards in them might then be seen as foundation deposits. However, there is nothing to link these features with the construction of the tombs, and indeed at *27:Roútsi* and at *35:Peristeriá* tholos 3 these features seem likely to post-date construction.

Opening the grave

The architecture of tholos and chamber tombs provides for clear and obvious entrances that need to be negotiated in order to enter the tomb. Two barriers may be present: in almost all cases where evidence is available, it is clear that the stomia of tombs were closed with drystone walls; and it is also commonly assumed that dromoi were filled with earth after each use of the tomb. The act of opening the tomb would therefore entail the removal of the drystone blocking wall in the stomion, and possibly also the earth fill of the dromos. The latter activity would require considerable effort, making the opening a joint project between several people. For larger tombs, removal of the stomion blocking wall would also be quite an effort, and likely to have been undertaken by several people.

Evidence for incomplete removal of the fill of the dromos or the incomplete taking down of the blocking wall is often mentioned in excavation reports. Such evidence comprises the stratigraphy of the dromos, or the stratigraphy of the blocking wall (often two or more layers of

differing construction style or material suggest events where the wall has been partially removed). This evidence often seems most likely to relate to late use of the tomb, whether in the late Mycenaean period or in post-bronze age times. There are no clear-cut cases where incomplete removal of the fill of the dromos of the blocking wall relates to the period under discussion in this section.

The act of opening the grave is highly symbolically charged. The pattern that is established in this thesis of regular interference with the dead in what becomes a traditional manner shows that users of these tombs maintained an ongoing concern for the dead within the tombs, both as individual human beings and as the corporate body of the ancestors. The architecture of the tombs allows for *control* of access to the content of the tombs. This control is established through the separation of the dead from the living in an underground chamber that is cut off from the world by the walled up entrance and perhaps by the filled in dromos.

The act of opening the stomion is therefore one of changing the circumstances of the world: before opening the stomion, one's approach to the tomb is made safe by the fact of the blank façade, against which one might make some small act of recognition toward those within. Once open, however, one approaching must be ready to face the bones of the ancestors laid bare before her, and all the social myth, history, power and meaning that they might seem to represent. By opening the tomb, requirements in behaviour and in interpretation are changed and heightened; it is the prelude to contact with the dead within.

Closing the grave

The evidence for closure of the stomion in the form of a drystone wall at almost all tombs is so overwhelming and well-known that there is no need to mention each instance within the present sample. This does not obviate the question of the circumstances under which such a wall might be constructed: was the blocking wall built and rebuilt after every moment of entry into the tomb?

The short answer is obviously that one cannot prove that it was. Moreover, many late (LHIII and beyond) instances of entry into tombs seem to involve only the partial removal of the blocking wall and its not being rebuilt afterward. These instances occur under changed conditions, the irruption being more opportunistic than specifically knowledgeable - in other words, the interest of those involved was not so much in acting in a manner that recovered and reaffirmed perceived relationships with the tomb and the particular, known, perhaps named

dead within, but rather was a more general interest in coming into contact with the distant past: an explanation that would accommodate both instances of tomb cult, hero worship, ancestor worship, as well as activities primarily concerned with the procurement and removal of material from the tomb.

To turn the question around somewhat, how would it be if the tomb were left unblocked? There is no overwhelming reason that a tomb need be blocked. The decomposition of the corpse would suggest (particularly to clean western minds) that the tomb would need to be blocked for some time after interment. In most cases, though, the evidence for nearby settlement is scanty, and so an unblocked tomb with rotting corpse might not necessarily pose a health risk, and our notions of the pollution of the corpse need not be projected into the past. The occasional instances of small jars that might be used for perfumed oil with which to anoint the corpse, as discussed in chapter seven (and in the LHII-III period, the numerous instances of alabastra and then stirrup jars: Cavanagh 1998, 106), do however suggest a concern that the odour of putrefaction be minimised. This is one observation that tends to make the blocking of the door each time likely.

Another is that, aside from the symbolic significance of the entrance, practical measures to protect the content of the tomb would inevitably have been necessary. I am not thinking of humans who, if intent on gaining entry against the wishes of those who had carried out the funeral, would not be stopped by a stone wall or even filling in the dromos: such people could only be prevented from gaining entry by forcible restraint[18]. Animals, on the other hand, could be expected to take advantage of an open door to enter the tomb, interfere with the content and feed from the corpse and perhaps any older bones and other organic material (remains of funerary feasts, for example) within. This would seem as good a reason as any to close the tomb when not directly being used.

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[18] This point should perhaps be laboured, since a need to protect the remains of the dead and most particularly the precious materials buried with them is often regarded as the main point of the blocking wall and filled in dromos. The filling in of the dromos would not hide the location of the tomb, which would be well known to any possible 'robber' in any case: if archaeologists can achieve such success in locating them 3500 years later, what difficulty would the determined robber of the time have faced, when local knowledge and the freshly turned earth would reveal the dromos? Moreover entry to a tomb, once located, need involve excavating only a small portion of the dromos and the first few layers of stones of the blocking wall: a feat well within the ability of two or three people in a couple of hours. Once inside, the robbery of remains on the floor requires a few seconds. While this sort of thing may have gone on in a small way, it was quite clearly not a major problem, for if it had been a problem, either a means of dealing with it, or some alternative means of burying the dead, would have been found. The *reason* for it not having been a problem presumably rests with the nature of society and the lack of the sort of infrastructure that would have been required to convert stolen goods into personal gain. Where such events do seem to have taken place, they often seem related to later periods when the infrastructure necessary to deal with objects from ancient tombs might have been in existence.

It is most likely, however, that the closing of the entrance would have been understood in primarily symbolic terms by those using the tomb: the blocked route from outside to inside symbolising the incorporation of the dead among the ancestors, and the separation of the dead from the living.

The question of the filling in of the dromos is somewhat different. The orthodox view is that the dromoi of chamber and tholos tombs were completely filled in after every use, a viewpoint that can be traced back at least as far as Tsoúndas' observations on chamber tombs at Mycenae (Tsountas & Manatt 1897, 139), and repeated by Pelon (1976, 293). This is the opinion of most excavators of chamber tombs, such as Wace (1932, 127-128), Blegen (1937, 236) and Persson (1931, 26; 1942, 154). In the vast majority of excavations, no record has been published of stratigraphic observations in the dromos, and where observations are published they are usually interpreted as the result of the digging out and filling in of the dromos for each burial. In the example of the slightly later tomb of Káto Englianós (*24:Englianós* tholos III) Taylour describes the excavation of the dromos in two halves, so as to examine the stratigraphy. Four layers were identified, each separated by an ash layer, suggesting that fire formed a part of the ritual either after opening or before filling in the dromos. Tayour's suggestion that the tomb had been opened four times does not in fact provide any information as to how long it was open on each occasion, nor does it account for the possibility that one or more excavation in the past might have been as thorough as Taylour's, thus removing from the centre of the fill earlier stratigraphic traces.

Only very careful observations at the sides of dromoi might elucidate usable information on the number of times a dromos has been opened and closed, but even here the very fact that the same earth is likely to have been put back in as was taken out would make such observations extremely difficult. Archaeological evidence shows that dromoi *were* regularly filled in with earth, and there is clear evidence from a reasonable number of tombs that this earth might well be excavated and filled in again on a number of occasions. But these observations alone do not prove that the dromos was normally filled in after each entry to the tomb.

The factors that made the blocking of the stomion likely after each entry do not apply in the case of the filling in of the stomion. Any perceived need, whether 'practical' or 'symbolic', to close the chamber, would be adequately fulfilled by the device of the blocking wall. But the *presence* of the tomb in the landscape, particularly in the case of chamber tombs dug into a hillside, or underground, as in the case of wholly underground tholoi, was explicitly signalled by the same architectural features that were essential to the functioning of the tomb. The presence

of the ancestors in the chamber and in the landscape was clearly indicated by that passageway leading down and into the earth; and the liminal point, the transition between light and life and darkness and death, was firmly stated in architecture by the closed façade of the tomb.

It is certainly possible to suggest reasons why the dromos *might* be left open. There may, for example, have been traditions (differing within different cemeteries, communities, families or other groups) that the dromos be left open for a certain period after interment to allow for activities related to the recently dead. Given widespread evidence for disarticulation of skeletons, it is possible that the dromos was left open for a period of a few years until that could be done. These are fairly random suggestions: the point is that since we do not know whether the dromos was filled in immediately, it is at least possible to imagine reasons why it might not be.

On the other hand, chamber and tholos tombs are *not* found where the dromos had not eventually been filled in. This is a strong argument for the position that, even if the dromos were not filled in after every act in the tomb, certainly by the late Mycenaean period, traditions existed that ensured dromoi were eventually filled in (for example at Kalkáni, Mycenae: Wace 1932, 127-128). This problem is insoluble on the present evidence, and much more careful excavation of tholos and chamber tomb dromoi is called for in future.

Stomia and dromoi occasionally are found to contain material that might relate to acts of closure. This evidence is summarised by site below.

Site		Tomb	Evidence	Comment
17	Voïdhokiliá	Voïdhokiliá	kylix, Vafió cup and LMI pot fragments in stomion	
23	Volimídhia	many tombs	kylix fragments against facades	mainly post-LHI?
24	Englianós	tholos IV	kylix and Vafió cup sherds in stomion	many other items in dromos, stomion and blocking wall came from chamber
27	Roútsi	tholos 2	fragments of six large Vafió cups and bronze double-axe against doorway	
39	Psári	tholos 1	Vafió cup fragments in dromos	

Table 6.6. Evidence for 'toasting' ceremonies related to the closure of tholos and chamber tombs.

In a few cases there is therefore clear evidence for drinking ceremonies in the dromos, ending with cups smashed against the blocked façade, as is common in LHIII chamber tomb cemeteries (Wace 1932, 131; Blegen 1937, 237-238).

There are a few instances where closure of the tomb involved unorthodox methods. At *10:Gouvalári* tomb 10 in mound A was closed by a large piece of slate, in a similar manner to the closing of pithoi whose mouths rest on built stone supports. The entrance to the tholos in mound B was not blocked by stones. At *39:Psári Metsíki* the stomion was blocked by two walls, one at each end; moreover, the peribolos of the mound crossed the end of the dromos to form a third blocking wall, although obviously much lower. On *62:Kíthira* it appears that normal practice was to block the stomion but not to block the entrances to side chambers off the central chamber, although later interference makes this point unclear.

Finally thought should be given to a more permanent form of closure. The vast majority of tholos tombs are found to be in a more or less collapsed state when excavated. Natural causes in the form of earthquake and collapse brought about through the cumulative effect of imperfections in the architecture are the most likely explanations, but in a few cases there might be a suspicion of human intervention. One such case must be tholos 3 at *35:Peristeriá*, where the evidence suggests that the floor of the chamber was fairly thoroughly cleared and some of the content placed in the pit, while other material found in the stomion is also likely to have been redeposited from the chamber. The tholos collapsed, or was thoroughly destroyed, shortly after these events, and the so called 'circle', a massive curving wall of unknown function, was built of the spoil shortly thereafter. The destruction of tholos 3 may well have been part of a programme that began with the clearing of the chamber and the deposition of material in the pit.

The LHI-IIA, LHIIA and LHIIB periods (tables 1.12-1.15, page 34-35)

Preparation of construction materials

The larger tombs of this period would have required greater volumes of stone to be procured or quarried and in some cases dressed. These tombs often use stone blocks rather than stone slabs, and the stones used in stomia can be quite well worked: examples are the façades of tholos I at *35:Peristeriá*, with some sawn blocks, and tholos 1 at *18:Tragána*. It is obvious that for all of these undertakings, especially the larger and better appointed tombs, a large and co-ordinated body of labour was involved.

Other acts before beginning

Tholos tomb I at *35:Peristeriá* was built at the very beginning of the LHIIA period in an area previously occupied by 'houses' of unknown character (the 'east house', **A1.*35*.51**). The pottery from these houses includes material judged by Lólos as coming from the final years of the LHI style (1985, 540). These buildings, if not actually occupied, must have been known about, visible, and perhaps still standing when the decision to build tholos tomb I was taken. It is possible that their destruction in advance of tholos construction was part of a planned organisation of the hillside, separating the funerary sphere from other architectural zones. The tholoi at *18:Tragána* and possibly that at *19:Solinári* were both set in earlier remains: EH stone working is noted in the former case, and MH settlement in the latter. The builders of these tombs would have come into contact with this material; they may have known of its existence in advance, and have acted in some way to clear or otherwise engage with remains.

Digging or building the grave

New constructions to be considered in this section are tholos tombs of varying dimensions and architecture, with chamber tombs at *52:Pellána*, *24:Englianós* and *60:Sikéa*.

The chamber tomb phenomenon, which became widespread elsewhere in this period, is almost absent from the area under study. That there are only three new sites (one tomb each), plus continuing construction and use at *23:Volimídhia*, *58:Epídhavros Limirá*, and perhaps *62:Kíthira*, shows how unusual the chamber tomb form remained in LHII. The *60:Sikéa* tomb (**A1.*60*.1**), whose chronology in any case is far from certain, is of 'standard' type, that is to say with rectangular chamber of dimensions comparable to contemporary examples in the Argolid. *60:Sikéa* is located in eastern Lakonía, and even if an early date is correct it represents an eastern Peloponnesian tradition. The *24:Englianós* chamber tomb (**A1.*24*.39-40**) is the first of a handful to be built in the vicinity of the later palace. Its oval shape may owe something to the nearby *23:Volimídhia* tradition, but it does not exhibit the architectural peculiarities of those tombs. Again, this tomb seems rather exceptional, and even in LHIII chamber tombs were not numerous around the palace.

The chamber tomb at *52:Pellána* (**A1.*52*.7-10**) is peculiar on two counts: it is immense, at 10.05m diameter the largest known chamber tomb; and it is exceptionally well carved, with rounded chamber and triangular stomion. The tomb belongs conceptually with the large tholos tombs built at this time, rather than with the chamber tombs of (say) the Argolid; the obvious

architectural similarities with the *23:Volimídhia* tombs implies some connection with that cemetery.

The average diameter of chambers in tholos tombs constructed in LHII is about 7.2m (table 6.7 below); for the MHIII-LHI tholoi listed in table 6.2, the corresponding average is about 4.2m. Even removing the small tholoi in multiple mounds (three or more tholoi), the average for the earlier tombs is only 5.57m. All of the largest tombs of this period (those over 8m in diameter), and other tholoi with architectural refinements such as *18:Tragána* 1, are LHIIA constructions, and follow immediately from the late LHI constructions such as *24:Englianós* IV, *39:Psári* tholos 1, and the *51:Análipsis* tholos, built either late LHI or LHIIA. There is every reason to expect that the unexcavated but monumental tholos tomb at Epía Antheía (appendix two; **A2.2-5**) is also an LHIIA construction. In later periods there are no examples within the study area (appendix two), and few elsewhere, of the construction of large tholoi[32]. Therefore both within the study area and elsewhere (at Mycenae, where six large tholos tombs are built in LHIIA: Dickinson 1977, 62-63) the construction of large and refined tholoi in LHIIA is one culmination of the long series of building projects begun at the end of the middle helladic period. Tholos tombs continue in use and continue to be constructed (though in the study area not at the most monumental level) into the LHIII period, but it seems likely that the construction of the largest tholoi occurred during a relatively short chronological horizon, no more than 100 years, and perhaps much shorter. The construction of these large tholoi represents a special manifestation of the tholos-building phenomenon, where not only were the relevant skills available, but tholos builders were able to command a substantial workforce for some time, in the quarrying, working and transport of raw material, and in the building of the tomb. Meanwhile the construction of medium sized tholoi continued, as indeed it did in the following period.

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[32] Large or architecturally refined tholoi thought to have been constructed in LHIII are: at Mycenae, the tombs of Atreus, Klytemnaestra and the Genii; at Orhomenós, the Treasury of Minyas. The Menídhi tholos tomb in northern Athens, at 8.35m diameter, and the two tholoi from Dhimini, diameters 8.5m and 8.3m, just about qualify for this list.

Site		Identification	Diameter	Setting	Masonry
11	Koukounára	Akónes 1	6.2m	Mound	Flat stones
11	Koukounára	Akónes 2	5.4m	Underground?	Flat stones
12	Koukounára	Livadhíti	4.62m	Mound	Flat stones
12	Koukounára	Fitiés 1	6m	Mound	Flat stones
12	Koukounára	Fitiés 2	5.9m	Underground	Flat stones
18	Tragána	Tragána 1	7.25m	Mound/natural ridge?	Flat stones, dressed in stomion
18	Tragána	Tragána 2	7.15m	Mound/natural ridge?	Flat stones, dressed in stomion
19	Solinári	Solinári	5.1m	Mound	Flat stones
24	Englianós	Englianós III	7.69m	Natural slope	Flat/irregular stones
25	Kapláni	Kapláni 1	5m	Unknown	Flat stones
25	Kapláni	Kapláni 2	about 5m	Unknown	Flat stones
26	Halkías Aelías	Halkías Aelias 1	3.95m	Unknown	Unknown
26	Halkías Aelías	Halkías Aelias 2	3.95m	Unknown	Unknown
31	Dhára Fráma	Dhára Frama	6.75m	Unknown	Unknown
34	Kámbos	Kámbos	about 8m	Natural low ridge	Partly dressed blocks
35	Peristeriá	Tholos I	12.03m	Mound	Partly dressed blocks, sawn block façade
35	Peristeriá	Tholos II	10.6m	Mound	Flat stones, partly dressed blocks in stomion
35	Peristeriá	Tholos V	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
36	Kopanáki	'Mound A' (excavated tholos)	5.35m	Mound	Flat stones
38	Vasilikó	Vasilikó	6.5m	Underground/ mound?	Flat stones
40	Filiatrá Ayos Hristóforos	Filiatrá Ayos Hristóforos	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
43	Kakóvatos	Kakóvatos A	12.12m	Natural slope	Flat stones
43	Kakóvatos	Kakóvatos B	about 9m	Natural slope	Flat stones, paved chamber floor
43	Kakóvatos	Kakóvatos C	10.25m	Natural slope	Flat stones
51	Análipsis	Large tholos	8.65m	Mound	Flat stones
54	Vafió	Vafió	10.25m	Natural slope	Partly dressed blocks

Table 6.7. Variability in tholos tomb architecture.

These large tholoi are widely distributed, suggesting that the communities of different areas at this time sought to build these large tombs. Particularly where there is no MHIII-LHI tradition of tholos building, as at *44:Kakóvatos*, *54:Vafió* or *34:Kámbos*, it seems almost certain that those constructing the tombs would be non-local specialists. At *44:Kakóvatos*, for example, these specialists either stayed or returned in order to construct three large tombs. It is possible that different groups of people, differently specialised, might have been involved in the construction of tombs at different scales. In the central Messenian region, for example, the number of tholoi makes it reasonable to believe that tholos building was a locally maintained skill, even if a skill restricted to a few people; elsewhere, in the Soulíma Valley such a tradition developed in the LHI-II period, while elsewhere again no such tradition existed and tholoi remain chronologically and topographically isolated phenomena.

Further details of architecture are given in table 6.7 above. Comparing this table to the corresponding table 6.2 for earlier tholoi, it is clear that there is greater variability in the architectural setting, some tholoi making use of natural features such as ridges or hills, which was almost unknown in the previous period, and in the type of masonry, although in this last case tholoi using masonry other than flat stones can be equated with the larger tombs.

Site	Tomb	Architectural features
11	Koukounára	Akónes 1	Pit
11	Koukounára	Akónes 2	Small pits (unknown number)
12	Koukounára	Livadhíti	Two niches in chamber either side of entrance
12	Koukounára	Fitiés 1	One elongated pit
12	Koukounára	Fitiés 2	No feature
18	Tragána	Tragána 1	Four peripheral pits; two furrows running from entrance to chamber
18	Tragána	Tragána 2	Three or four pits; stomion floor level lower than chamber and continues thus into chamber forming a pit
19	Solinári	Solinári	Three pits
24	Englianós	Englianós III	Two pits
24	Englianós	Chamber tomb E8	Two pits, one niche, two large niches in dromos
25	Kapláni	Kapláni 1	At least one pit
25	Kapláni	Kapláni 2	Unknown
26	Halkías Aelías	Halkías Aelias 1	Unknown
26	Halkías Aelías	Halkías Aelias 2	Unknown
31	Dhára Fráma	Dhára Frama	Unknown
34	Kámbos	Kámbos	Unknown
35	Peristeriá	Tholos I	No feature
35	Peristeriá	Tholos II	Drain in stomion and dromos
35	Peristeriá	Tholos V	Unknown
36	Kopanáki	'Mound A' (excavated tholos)	Drain in stomion and dromos; 'bench' in chamber
38	Vasilikó	Vasilikó	Niche in wall above floor level; large pit (probably not Mycenaean in date)
40	Filiatrá Ayos Hristóforos	Filiatrá Ayos Hristóforos	Unknown
44	Kakóvatos	Kakóvatos A	Pit with probable slab covering
44	Kakóvatos	Kakóvatos B	Chamber floor paved with irregular limestone slabs
44	Kakóvatos	Kakóvatos C	Pit
51	Análipsis	Large tholos	Two pits
52	Pellána	Pellána 2	No feature
54	Vafió	Vafió	Pit in stomion; cist in chamber
60	Sikéa	Sikéa	Seven pits, one niche

Table 6.8. Secondary architectural features such as pits, cists, and niches.

The architecture of graves within the tombs. As with the tholoi and chamber tombs of the previous period, so the new tombs contain a number of secondary architectural features, often impossible to date (table 6.8 above). Notwithstanding the chronological difficulties, the features listed below mirror fairly closely those found in the tholoi presented in the previous chapter and any analysis of LHIII tombs would no doubt find similar features.

Acts at the end of the construction phase

Both tholoi at *18:Tragána* exhibit furrows or pits in the stomion and chamber (**A1.*18*.4, A1.*18*.7-8, A1.*18*.14**), as noted in relation to *10:Gouvalári*, *27:Roútsi* and *35:Peristeriá* tholos 3 above (page 163). In tholos 1 these consist of two parallel furrows running from just outside the dromos to 50cm into the chamber. Two deposits might have been foundation deposits: in the northern furrow, there was a footed vessel, a bowl, a ewer, a knife, two razors and a flat vessel, all bronze; in the dromos, just in front of the stomion, there was another hoard of (perhaps deliberately) crushed large and small bronze items. No date has been suggested for these items, and they may easily not have been foundation deposits, just as the furrows may not be part of the primary tholos architecture. In tholos 2 the stomion itself is lower than the level of the chamber floor, and the stomion floor level continues as a pit 3.5m into the chamber. Again, this feature need not necessarily relate to the end of the construction phase.

Opening the grave

The acts involved in opening the grave in respect of the larger tombs differ from the smaller ones once more in terms of scale, which impacts on the relationship between the people involved and the monument. While a relatively small team might open the dromos and blocking wall of a chamber tomb or average tholos tomb in a reasonably short time, the same team would labour much longer to open a tomb like *35:Peristeriá* tomb I or *54:Vafió*. It would seem likely, as with construction, that a larger number of people would have been involved.

Closing the grave

The blocking walls of large tholoi are rarely elaborate, but like other examples continue to be rough stone constructions, in contrast to the walling of the façade. Tholos 2 at *35:Peristeriá* had remains of two periods of blocking wall, one noted as being well built; this tomb also had a wall running across the end of the dromos, either a closing wall or perhaps associated with a peribolos. The stomion of tholos 1 at *35:Peristeriá* was blocked at both ends by a rough wall, with rubble filling the space in between (**A1.*35*.66**). This was a very substantial barrier, which on at least one occasion was opened only partially and then built up again (this inner and outer blocking is also found at *19:Solinári* (**A1.*19*.4**), and at *39:Psári*, which also had the end of the dromos blocked by a peribolos wall). The blocking wall of *44:Kakóvatos* A, of rounded pebbles, was also substantial, going 2.75m deep into the stomion, more than half its depth.

At *35:Peristeriá* tholos II a series of finds running up to 1.5m into the dromos from the chamber was suggested to represent the flow of material out of the chamber due to the action of mud. This material was found below the level of the *earlier* phases of the stomion blocking wall. Not only had the tomb been in use for some time, or at least intensively, judging by the amount and variety of the material, but moreover if its deposition in the dromos was really the result of mud flow, either the blocking wall had not been constructed at that time, or that it was completely removed and rebuilt at this point. Further, mud flow into the dromos also demonstrates that the dromos had not been filled in. So this tomb provides some evidence that there could be periods of time when the tomb might be left open.

To the question of the closure of the grave one important point is added by the carefully constructed stomia of (generally) the larger tombs under consideration here. When the tomb is open, the bright façade frames the darkness of the chamber and directs the gaze within. When the tomb is closed, the door blocked by a rough stone wall, the more ornate façade stands out, perhaps made more prominent by ephemeral devices now lost. Even more so with these tholoi, then, the closed tomb with open dromos forms a substantial feature in the landscape.

Chapter Seven

Preparation: acts outside the grave

'Simpler' graves (table 1.2, page 29)

Preparation of materials

The preparation of artefacts of any description to be used in the funerary ceremony can only be evidenced where the artefacts, or some trace of them, survive. Most of the graves in this sample were found without any artefacts. About one third of graves at *57:Ayos Stéfanos* contained artefacts (listed in tables 7.1 & 8.1), six graves at *37:Málthi*, and one grave each at *53:Menelaion* and *55:Amikléon*.

Few of these objects can have been made for a specific funeral. The objects from *57:Ayos Stéfanos* include metal objects such as jewellery or knives, which can hardly have been made in anticipation of a particular ceremony, stone items such as obsidian arrowheads and carnelian beads, and pottery. The obsidian might have been prepared at the graveside: analysis of the objects themselves could show if this were the case (for example Carter 1998, 63-65). It is possible that small beads of simple shape and without perforations could be made for a specific funeral (in a few hours) if raw material were to hand (conversation with Elína Stamatátou); however it seems much more likely that these beads were taken from another context, either from a ready-made supply or from a context of everyday use. The examples of jewellery are so few (one grave) that the explanation involves not objects prepared for a funeral, but the opportunistic use of objects intended for the living on the dead. In this one case the jewellery might have been habitually worn by the dead when alive; the lack of jewellery in other graves

means that the mourners chose to deviate from custom with this grave. The few weapons are also likely to have been taken out of more routine contexts for deposition in the grave.

The pottery used in the graves is not often different from that discovered in settlement contexts: the Vafió cup in grave D14, for example, is common in settlement contexts, and moreover is regularly found in more monumental burial settings. Certain pottery items were however noted by their excavator as being unusual and not paralleled from settlement contexts. A small two-handled jar in grave A1, for example, is unusual in form and may have been made by an unskilled or semi-skilled potter; a jar and cup from grave A23 (**A1.*57*.7**) were unusually decorated with incisions, the cup pierced with holes as if to allow for suspension; two small cups in grave A31 were of unusual shape and size. While these items could not have been made for a specific funeral, their unusual shapes or forms suggest that they were taken from some other unusual, non-everyday context, or perhaps that they were made in advance and held in readiness.

The material from these graves therefore entails the following transformations:

- the pottery was usually taken from domestic contexts to be used in the funeral; its deposition indicated that its use in the funeral made its return to the domestic sphere inappropriate;
- metal objects such as knives, pins and jewellery, rare in the graves, were not normally used in burial customs; where used, their transformation in meaning relates directly to the act of adorning the corpse, and in the funeral they become part of the fabric of the corpse;
- other material used in adorning the corpse changed in meaning in the same way.

Nonetheless, the lack of material in two thirds of *57:Ayos Stéfanos* graves, and in most of the other simpler graves under study, indicates that the use of material culture, or rather its transformation into an item associated with the grave, was possible but not essential in the burial practices here evidenced.

Of the *37:Málthi* graves, one contained a large number of pottery items, including an unusual double jug (**A1.*37*.8**). In a cemetery where a very large proportion of graves seem to have no associated artefacts, this grave is marked by its contents. The double jug in particular indicates that specific ritual associations were invoked in preparing the material.

Preparation of the corpse

Sites that are unexcavated or where excavation is barely reported can offer no information as to these questions: hence only *35:Peristeriá*, *37:Málthi*, *41:Filiatrá Stomion*, *53:Menelaion*, *55:Amikléon*, and *57:Ayos Stéfanos* are considered here.

35:Peristeriá: the nine child cist burials contained no artefacts. The skeletons are not described, save that the children are aged between two and seven years old. Thus no particular evidence has been found or reported that sheds light on the treatment of the corpse, save that the corpse does *not* appear to have been adorned with any material that might survive in the archaeological context.

37:Málthi: of the six graves containing material related to the dead, in grave 23 there were three beads found near the neck of the dead and thus probably representing a necklace. The pottery of grave 23 is mainly related to drinking rather than preparation of the corpse, as was that of grave 24 and grave 1. In grave 5 a 'spindle whorl' was found underneath the corpse, perhaps originally adhering to clothing, and in grave 10 a bead of blue glass was found at the head of the corpse. It therefore seems reasonable to state that, with these few exceptions, it was not normal at *37:Málthi* to decorate the body with materials that are preserved archaeologically. This rules out neither direct body modification such as painting or scarring, nor the use of organic materials such as cloth. The fact that the majority of burials are of children and infants may have a bearing on the lack of preserved evidence for artefacts of adornment: graves 5 & 10 were both adult.

As to the positions of the bodies at *37:Málthi*, extended, contracted and disarticulated skeletons are present. Among the seventeen adults, there are three contracted, eleven disarticulated and three extended burials. The disarticulation is clearly a product of post-interment interference rather than primary interment: graves 37 & 38 represent redeposition, and grave 15 was perhaps damaged by later building work. In the cases of the contracted burials, where the legs seem to be at an angle of 90° to 100° to the body, it is possible that the legs had been bound before burial.

Among the children and infants, twelve individuals from nine graves were contracted, at least eighteen individuals from nine graves were disarticulated and nineteen individuals from fourteen graves were extended inhumations. Such wide variation combined with the lack of chronological

data means that no safe conclusions may be drawn from the skeletons about the preparation of these children's corpses for burial.

41:Filiatrá Stomion: there were no artefacts with the burial. The skeleton was contracted, with the knees positioned at about 45° to the trunk (**A1.*41*.2**): it is possible that the body was prepared by binding the legs, bent at the knee, but it is again not essential to suppose this.

53:Menelaion: each of the six burials here was contracted, again raising the possibility of binding the legs before interment. The burial in the shaft grave offers some possible insights into the treatment of the corpse. A textile impression on the skeleton implies the use of a shroud or cloak, or perhaps that the corpse was laid on (carried in?) a cloth. Two items may have further adorned the corpse: a fragment of gold, though this has not been described or illustrated, and a terracotta spindle whorl. This last category is extremely common in the sites discussed in this thesis, and is likely to represent some part of the clothing of the corpse (Iakovidis 1977).

55:Amikléon: a knife in the third burial may have been part of the dress of the corpse.

57:Ayos Stéfanos: about one third of the graves at *57:Ayos Stéfanos* contained artefacts. Of the pottery, most are open shapes and cannot be associated with preparatory acts on the corpse with any certainty. Of the other objects, a terracotta 'button', in fact almost tubular (Taylour 1972, plate 42c2), from grave A19, may have been sewn or fixed to the clothing of the corpse; an unillustrated carnelian bead from A21 was also pierced by a hole and presumably affixed to clothing; a broken bronze pin from A22, 7cm in length when whole, may have been used on clothing either to hold a shroud or cloak in place, or decoratively (or both); a bone 'toggle pin' (see discussion below) and terracotta button from A31 were likely either sewn on the clothing of the dead or used to fasten it; a bronze knife found under the skeleton in D4 may have been worn.

Grave	Grave type	Number of individuals	Adult / child	Sex	Date	Items with burial
A19	cist	1	adult	female?	MH?	terracotta 'button'
A21		3	infant		MH?	Carnelian bead
A22	pit	1	adult		MH?	Bronze pin in two fragments
A23	cist	1	adult	female?	MH	bronze pin, ear-rings, ring, and bracelet; 14 carnelian beads; one bone needle
A28	cist	2	mixed	male?	MH/LH	bronze dagger, tweezers; bone pin & toggle pin
A31	cist	2	adult		MH	bone toggle pin; terracotta button
D4		1	adult	male	LHI	bronze knife
D12	pit/stone surround	1	adult	female	LHI?	Miniature bronze 'chisel'

Table 7.1. Graves at *57:Ayos Stéfanos*, showing only artefacts perhaps relating to the adornment of the corpse.

Three graves deserve special mention. In grave D12 a 'miniature bronze chisel' was found just above the skull, in the fill. Its find spot suggests it was not attached to the dress of the corpse, but rather placed or cast into the grave after the interment of the corpse. The item is unfortunately not illustrated, but is described as a 'very small and narrow tool, tapering to each end and sharpened to a chisel edge at both ends' (Taylour 1972, 225). It is 3cm long, with maximum width and thickness 0.2cm. Such an object may admittedly have been used for intricate working on artefacts, but it may equally have had some rôle in the funerary rite: for example in modification of the body of the dead (or of the mourners), perhaps depilation.

The other two graves, A23 and A28, contained a number of artefacts. In A23 (**A1.*57*.9**) a bronze pin found at the back of the skull, pointing to the right shoulder, almost certainly relates to the fastening of the corpse' clothing; the corpse was wearing bronze ear-rings on both ears, a bronze ring on a finger of the left hand, and probably a bronze bracelet on the upper left arm. A necklace of 14 carnelian beads was found in the chest area, and a bone pin was also found, presumably associated with clothing. A 'spool', 5.9cm high, may also have been attached to clothing, although it was recovered near the corpse' feet. We can therefore reconstruct some of the stages of preparation of this corpse for burial: it was dressed in a garment fastened at the shoulder by a bronze pin, and was further embellished with ear-rings, a finger ring and a necklace.

In A28 a dagger found toward the middle of the skeleton may have been attached to the corpse or its clothing. A 'toggle pin' of bone, very well worked, may have been purely decorative and attached to clothing, but it may also have been used to bind and hold clothing in position, as suggested by the name given to it by its excavator, and its position near the neck.

Most interesting in this grave, however, is a miniature bronze tweezers (3cm to 4cm long), found in or near the right hand of the skeleton. These may have been used for depilation.

In summary, although it is difficult to associate the pottery with preparatory acts on the corpse, almost all of the other items in these graves either certainly were or could have been. Most clear is the evidence for the dressing of the corpse shown in many of these graves; less certain is the tentative identification of objects perhaps used in the alteration of the body of the corpse (or the mourners). It is significant that, although there are roughly equal numbers of adult and child burials in the *57:Ayos Stéfanos* sample under discussion, of the burials listed here with possible evidence for the preparation of the corpse seven are adult and only one is a child (an infant, associated with a carnelian bead). This backs up the tentative similar observation from *37:Málthi*.

This evidence for dressing or modification of the corpse is clear in only eight of the 67 burials under discussion. There are three possible explanations for this:

- dressing the corpse was an unusual but not unknown ritual during the period of use of the cemetery;
- dressing the corpse was normal during one particular phase of the cemetery;
- dressing the corpse was normal throughout the use of the cemetery, but normally only cloth was used and these graves with other material result from the same ritual in an embellished form.

Two of the graves are dated LHI, one MH/LHI, the others MH: the dating is in any case too uncertain to determine whether the second interpretation is possible. Closer chronological control would help to settle these questions, although obviously the third possibility can never be proven.

The ratio of extended : contracted : disarticulated burials at *57:Ayos Stéfanos* is 19:20:23, with five unknown. In area A the ratio is 8:11:5, while among those burials showing evidence for preparatory acts on the corpse in area A the ratio is 3:3:0. There is therefore slight evidence that extended burials are more likely to be accompanied by material culture used in adorning or altering the corpse (because proportionately more extended than contracted inhumations were found with such material). If valid, this observation makes sense in as much as an extended corpse provides more area for display than a contracted corpse: the Mycenae shaft grave burials are good examples of this.

As for the possibility that skeletons might be arranged in some way before interment, some of the contracted skeletons may well have been bound, although few of these burials appear to be strongly contracted. One skeleton in particular, that in grave D23 (**A1.*57*.14**), had been bound hand and foot, the hands being bound at the wrists behind the back. Taylour (1972, 226) interprets this as evidence for execution: in other words, that the individual died at the hands of others in a prepared, ritual manner. No evidence for the cause of death was noted. Historical parallels (Britain in the twentieth century, not least) would suggest that often execution victims are not buried in the vicinity of the rest of society, although this is not the case here. Other explanations are possible: the individual may have been a sacrificial victim, for example (although execution can be argued to be a form of sacrifice).

The Mediterranean climate demands swift burial if the corpse is to be interred before putrefaction becomes noticeable (although it is possible that this would not have been a concern). Burial in modern Greece is usually accomplished within about 36 hours of death, and in the Islamic countries of the Mediterranean coast it is usual to inter on the same day as death. *Rigor mortis* begins about three hours after death, peaking at around 12 hours and lasting up to 36 hours. The contracted positions in which many 'simpler' burials are found suggest that the arrangement of the body in the position that it was eventually to maintain in the grave would have been achieved fairly shortly after death, either by binding the legs, and perhaps the hands (often found crossed over the pelvic region), or by wrapping tightly in a shroud. That these preparatory acts could be carried out so quickly after the possibly unexpected, and usually deeply upsetting, event of death, suggests that the practical responses to death were highly socialised and so structured. It is at least possible that the general change from contracted to extended inhumation that occurs in the MHIII-LHI period can be related in part to a slightly longer preparatory phase on the corpse, where the anointing and dressing might occur during the effects of *rigor mortis*.

Pithos burials require special arrangements and are considered in connection with *17:Voïdhokiliá* and *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia* in the next section. Graves D18 and D- at *57:Ayos Stéfanos*, and graves 21 and 30 at *37:Málthi* are of this type.

Other acts outside the grave

No evidence.

Preparation of materials

The pithoi used in Messenian tumuli are large (generally 1.4m to 2.2m in height) with wide bodies (more than a metre in diameter is common), sometimes with somewhat narrower necks widening slightly at the rim (**A1.*14*.20-23, A1.*17*.12-14, A1.*27*.4-5, A1.*35*.8**). There are rare examples of smaller pithoi used for children's burials (*14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia*, pithoi 23 & 24: **A1.*14*.25-28**). The fabric is generally red and coarse, and decoration is limited to rope decoration at the neck or rim. These pots are however by no means mass produced and there is considerable scope for typological variation.

The use of pithoi for burial is known from few sites before the middle helladic period. The best known example is that of the Lefkádha tumuli (Dörpfeld 1927), where there were 22 pithos burials in 14 of the tumuli. These pithoi were used for both adult and child burials, but the largest was only 1.22m tall (Souyoudzoglou-Haywood 1990, 32). Small pithoi were however used for infant or child burial throughout the bronze age: for example, there are four among the graves of *37:Málthi* and *57:Ayos Stéfanos*. Monumental examples such as those with which we are concerned are comparatively rare and are generally associated with MH-early LH burial customs. Examples outside the study area include those from the 'tumuli' of Argos and Dhendhrá (Protonotáriou-Dheïláki 1980). They are however most numerous on the island of Crete.

Cretan funerary pithoi are first found in late EMIII contexts and continue in use into LMI and beyond; their widespread use (from Hanlá to Sitefa) is an MM phenomenon. They are known from upward of thirty sites on the island, interred in Cretan-style tholos tombs, chamber tombs, caves, 'ossuaries' (rectangular buildings) and necropoleis (Pini 1968, 11-13). They are rarely larger than 1m tall, and are often set upright rather than laid on their side. Both adult and child pithos burials are known.

The recently published site of Arhánes Fourní (Sakellarakis & Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1997, especially 466-469), an unusually large and long-used complex, contained a correspondingly large number of burial pithoi. At least 65 burial pithoi were recovered from the site, from various different buildings, with few found on their own (three mortuary constructions contained respectively 24, 14 and 11 pithoi). Various different types of pithoi were used for interment (**A4.26**), ranging from 38cm to 85cm in height. The pithoi were generally upright

and usually contained a single contracted skeleton, although multiple interment was found, with up to five individuals present in one example.

The introduction of pithoi into the Minoan funerary repertoire, along with the synchronous introduction of clay coffins or 'larnakes' (**A4.27**), has been taken as a practice attempting to maintain the individuality of the dead or of particular burials in funerary contexts otherwise regarded as communal, where individual identity is lost (Branigan 1993, 65-67; Dickinson 1994, 215). As Branigan points out, however, if this was the intention it was at least partly subverted by the reuse of the pithoi.

The Minoan pithoi were in general smaller than the helladic examples under consideration in this chapter; they were also of quite different shape. They are well known from domestic contexts. They are found in different kinds of funerary sites than the helladic examples and generally are set upright rather than horizontally, as the helladic examples are. The *influence* of Crete on Messinía is therefore non-specific, and indeed may not have been present. Moreover, the non-adoption of larnax burial argues very strongly that any imitation of Cretan practice is at best very generalised.

The techniques and skills required for pithos production differ from those required for smaller scale ceramics. Those required for nineteenth and twentieth century production of *pitharia* in the area around Koróni in Messinía have been outlined by Blitzer (1990). She describes the following stages in pithos production: gathering and preparation of the clay, building the pot, and firing the pot. The clay need be mined and collected from the chosen source and transported to the pottery workshop: Blitzer reports that to make four to six 1m tall *pitharia* required about 35 donkey trips between source and workshop over a two-day period. Then seven to 15 days were required to transform the clay into usable raw material, removing impurities and mixing with water. The pithos was made by creating a disc of clay as a base and then building the pot by adding individual rings of clay. A ring was first set on the pot and then drawn up several hours later. One or at most two rings could be added per day: so from 5cm to at most 20cm per day. The potters under study achieved economies of scale by manufacturing several pithoi at once. Once the construction of the vessel was complete, ten days' drying time indoors and a further ten days' outside were required. The kilns used by the Messenian potters were not built for each firing, but were monumental tholos tomb-like structures built of mudbrick, up to 5m in diameter. Only up to six *pitharia* might be fired at once. The firing required up to 1,800 bundles of fuel (often vine or olive cuttings, or gathered from wild sources) and lasted 12 to 14 hours, with a further five days to cool. Three to four people were

needed to lift a *pithari* up to 1.3m tall; these could also be rolled by two people (Koroneïka *pitharia* were strengthened by ribbing for this purpose).

It is curious that the Messenian production of *pitharia* is one of the best parallels from modern traditional pottery for the Messenian bronze age pithoi under consideration here. Other relevant potting traditions (Jones 1986 chapter 9) include that at Thrápsano in Crete, where large jars seem to have been made somewhat more quickly than the equivalent Messenian *pitharia* (but were not of the same quality), and the pithos wine jars made by potters from 'Phini' in Cyprus. In both these cases itinerant potters would travel from village to village and spend greater or lesser periods satisfying local demand; this contrasts with the Messenian sedentary tradition: Koroneïka were traded on by merchants.

While there may well have been many specific differences between the middle helladic production of pithoi and the nineteenth to twentieth century production of *pitharia*, the data provided by Blitzer have significant implications as to how we should view the pithoi found in tumuli and tholoi. Perhaps most significant is Blitzer's observation that, despite the continuing production of small *pitharia*, 'the last potter who knew how to manufacture vessels on the scale of Type I died between 1910 and 1915. In 1935 ... the potter who made [Type 2] *pitharia* ... ceased to work. Until around 1955 potters were able to manufacture *pitharia* holding about 100 to 150 *okades*'. The clear implication is that production of pots on such a scale requires special skills, transmitted from potter to potter by apprenticeship, and that once lost these skills cannot be easily regained.

The maintenance of such skills ought therefore to be visible in the archaeological record in terms of pithos remains and kiln sites. In fact relatively few kiln sites are known, partly because they are regarded as having been relatively insubstantial constructions unlikely to survive the passing of time (Jones 1986, 874-875), although those illustrated by Blitzer, made of mud brick, were nonetheless of considerable dimensions and often associated with numerous sherds: something that would be quite visible in excavation and ought also to be picked up in intensive surveys. Hope Simpson & Dickinson (1979) include only one EH kiln site at Lake Vouliagméni near Perahóra, one MH at Marathón Plasi, and four LH: Mycenae, Tírinthos, Englianós and Berbáti. The Marathón site has not been described; that at Pílos is early Mycenaean but is small and was used for small pots. The Berbáti kiln (Åkerström 1968) also looks to be rather small (less than 2m interior diameter). We therefore have no specific evidence for pithos production.

In terms of remains, the *Pylos Regional Archaeological Project* report pithos fragments from a number of sites, although the report is not detailed (Davis *et alii* 1997, 437, 441). Howell (1992, *passim*) reports on pithos sherds at Nihória in all phases of MH. It is unclear whether these pithoi were of a similar scale as those found in the contexts of the tumuli under discussion in this section, but in any case it seems, despite a lack of suitable kiln sites, that the ability to produce such vessels was widespread at this time. Examples of large storage jars from Cretan contexts of this period are well known.

Therefore, although the evidence indicates quite widespread use of pithoi, there is little in the record that can be related to their production. The information gained from Blitzer's study of the traditional potters of Messinía suggests that pithos production was a specialised skill likely to be diffused among relatively few potters. Without an in-depth stylistic analysis of pithos typology of the middle helladic period, one can only suggest (on the basis that it is easier to move potters than enormous pithoi) that MH pithos makers are likely to have been summer itinerants setting up temporary workshops to cater for relatively small scale demand. The product of their labours, however, is likely to have been regarded as a relatively valuable item.

This last statement ought to be emphasised, since the coarse nature of pithoi has led more than one excavator in the past to take their presence as an indicator of the poverty of those who used them. The production of a pithos requires

- a specialist who knows how to choose and mix clay, form the vessel and fire it;
- labour in the form of mining and transporting the clay, processing the clay, building the pot, building the kiln (if not reusing a permanent kiln), firing the pot and transporting the final product;
- time: using Blitzer's estimates, a kiln-full of pithoi 2m tall (up to six pithoi) would require at least 45[1] days and at most 83[2] days to produce.

Even a minimum estimate of a single potter working for 45 days to produce six pithoi makes the pithos a valuable item in terms of the labour and time invested[3]. This should be contrasted with

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[1] Clay extraction and transport, 2 days; clay preparation, 7 days; pithos building at 20cm per day, 10 days; drying time, 20 days; firing and cooling, 6 days.
[2] Clay extraction and transport, 2 days; clay preparation, fifteen days; pithos building at 5cm per day, forty days; drying time, 20 days; firing and cooling, 6 days.
[3] It should be noted that the times involved in the production of prehistoric pithoi may well have varied considerably at each stage, for technological and indeed traditional reasons. Moreover, if the potter had one or two others working with him or her, carrying out such tasks as clay mining and preparation, a larger number of pithoi could have been under production, with different stages in production evident at any one time: the main limitation is the kiln, although more than one may have been in use. Note,

the firing in the same kiln of up to 800 small vessels (Blitzer 1990, 696). A potter may therefore have been kept busy for an entire season at a single settlement, depending on demand.

The value of pithoi is further underlined by the lead sometimes found to have been used to mend cracks and breaks in the jar (for example, *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia*, pithos 4; in a similar vein, a palace style jar - pit 3, Vayenás tholos, *24:Englianós* - was repaired with lead rivets[4]). Given the circumstances of production I have just outlined, it would be impossible to replace a broken pithos quickly, and it may have been impractical to do so if no specialist were available (and, although 'economic' circumstances are unknown, it may have been very 'expensive' to do so).

It therefore seems very unlikely that funerary pithoi were regarded as throwaway objects, conveniently reused in the burial context. Rather, the pithos is an object of some value deliberately deposited in the grave as a conscious elaboration of the funeral.

It remains to be considered whether pithoi were made especially for funerary practices. The pithoi in these and other graves tend to have bases that would not have allowed the pot to stand safely without support, but this in itself is not conclusive since the pithoi might have been bedded in the ground in a domestic context (as some of the MH pithoi preserved *in situ* at Lérna). They were clearly not very mobile, however, and so were not intended to be moved from place to place (this conclusion both from the lack of a supporting base and from the number of people needed to carry an *empty* pithos; they also lack the handles found on Minoan examples). The signs of repair on a few pithoi are sure indicators that these pithoi at least are likely to have had a past life as domestic equipment. It should be noted that considerable effort would be required to convert such a domestic pithos to funerary use: if bedded in a floor, that floor would have to be excavated and after the pithos was removed presumably relaid.

On the other hand, if one were to suggest that pithoi were made for the funerary context, taking into account the amount of time required for production, and especially if death occurred during winter, generally regarded as an unsuitable season for pithos production (Blitzer 1990), one need believe that pithoi were stockpiled in case of need.

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however, the greater labour required for such economies of scale. The point is simply that, whatever the details, the pithoi took a long time and much effort to produce.

[4] Lead joins from pithos 3 at *17:Voïdhokiliá* is illustrated in A1.*17*.16; this pithos comes from the EHII store room on the east side of the mound.

It seems likely to me therefore that burial pithoi were in most, though not necessarily all, cases reused from other contexts. Those other contexts provide a life history for the vessel, one which presumably relates either to the dead or to those engaged in conducting the funeral. The routines of life, manifested in agricultural storage, production and consumption, were mobilised as referents when the jar was taken out of those routines and placed elsewhere as funerary monument. In transforming the meaning of the pithos, funerary and domestic contexts could seem to make constant reference to each other, just as the place of the monument in the human landscape made contact between funerary and everyday contexts. Perhaps a human life story, worked through in those material and structural conditions, could in some sense be adequately symbolised by such a valuable element of that life.

Beyond the pithoi themselves, very few artefacts have been found in these monuments. These are listed in the following table:

Site		Grave identification	Number of individuals	Adult / child	Items with burial
14	Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia	pithos 3	unknown	unknown	clay spindle
14	Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia	cist 14	unknown	unknown	grey minyan pot fragments
14	Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia	pithos 19	two	adult	kantharos and jug
14	Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia	pithos 23 or 24	one or more	infant	Ewer
17	Voïdhokiliá	pithos 1	unknown	unknown	kantharos and one other pot
17	Voïdhokiliá	pithos 4	two	adult	early minyan sherd
17	Voïdhokiliá	pithos 5	one	adult	kantharos, flask, knife with silver pins
17	Voïdhokiliá	pithos 7	one	adult	kantharos, other pot, bronze knife, silver hair ring, bronze pin
17	Voïdhokiliá	pithos 10	unknown	unknown	kantharos and two other pots
17	Voïdhokiliá	pithos 11	one	adult	Kantharos
17	Voïdhokiliá	pithos 13	unknown	unknown	early minyan sherds
17	Voïdhokiliá	southern cist	one	adult	silver hair ring, two adriatic ware pots
17	Voïdhokiliá	eastern cist	two	adult	one pot
27	Roútsi Kaloyeropoúlou	central construction	none	-	double cup, cup, strainer

Table 7.2. MHI-II graves containing artefacts other than pithoi. Some of the items from *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia* may in fact date to MHIII. Pithos 15 at *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia* is not included in this list because the obsidian arrow found in the chest of the corpse was the cause of death and not an item deposited at the time of the funeral.

The grey minyan kantharos is found in a number of graves. There is no particular reason to assume that these pots were made for funerary purposes, as they are found in domestic deposits (Howell 1992); however, the clear preference for the use of the kantharos in rituals at *14:Ayos*

Ioánnis Papoúlia and *17:Voïdhokiliá* suggests that a second meaning associated with burial might have been inherent in how those using these two sites would have understood kantharoi. Metal prototypes for kantharoi are represented by those found at *35:Peristeriá* (**A1.*35*.21**).

Preparation of the corpse

Items associated with the adornment of the corpse are few: pithos 5, *17:Voïdhokiliá*, where a knife with silver rivets was found next to the corpse and so presumably formed part of its dress; pithos 7 of the same site, where the dress of the corpse included a bronze knife, a bronze pin, and a silver hair ring; the corpse in the cist grave within the mound at *17:Voïdhokiliá* was wearing a silver hair ring; and a clay spindle found in pithos 3, *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia* may well be associated with the dress of the corpse (table 7.2 above).

There is equally meagre evidence from the skeletons themselves. Leaving aside those skeletons clearly interfered with in a post-burial context, those in burial pithoi are in a contracted position, which is clearly the result of the act of insertion into the pithos, rather than some pre-insertion activity. Certain of the inhumations in the (possibly late) cist graves of *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia* were extended.

In general it is possible to say, at least for the better known sites (*14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia* and *17:Voïdhokiliá*) that preparatory acts on the corpse are little evidenced in the material remains. While this may mean that very little effort was invested in preparing the corpse itself for the funeral, we must equally remain open to the likelihood that organic materials, in the form of clothing and paints, and other forms of body modification such as depilation, may have formed part of these acts. What little evidence there is indicates more attention paid to the corpse in graves at *17:Voïdhokiliá* than at *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia*.

Other acts outside the grave

The use of funerary pithoi at all of these sites, and at some of those to be considered in the next chapter, opens up the possibility that the insertion of the corpse into the pithos may have happened before reaching the grave. Both pithos and corpse need be transported to the grave, and we have no way of knowing whether they were transported separately or together.

If the corpse were inserted in the pithos away from the grave, such an act would represent a culmination of all of the activity surrounding the corpse up to that point: its preparation for insertion into the pithos. The funeral would therefore consist of two clear phases, that away from the grave and that at the grave, separated in time and space, and each ending in an 'interment'.

Most of the excavated pithoi seem to have been positioned in the mound so as to facilitate activity at the mouth (chapter 8). This presumably relates to the first interment as well as any future interments. If, on the other hand, the insertion of the corpse preceded the interment of the pithos, the pithos with the body already inside could easily have been placed more deeply or in a different position in the grave. The positioning of the pithoi therefore not only facilitates reuse but also facilitates the insertion of the first corpse, and this suggests that in most cases the insertion of the corpse happened at the grave.

BURIAL MOUNDS OF LIKELY MH DATE (TABLE 5.2, PAGE 116)

Preparation of materials

Many of these mounds are suggested to have contained pithos burials: the comments in the previous section apply equally here.

Preparation of the corpse

One of the pithoi from *8:Kissós* was investigated, and found to contain an adult skeleton compressed (apparently without disarticulation) into a pot only 70cm tall. The feet and skull bones were found together. The corpse must have been very tightly bound in preparation for insertion into the pithos; perhaps it was even dissected.

Other acts outside the grave

No information.

With the possible exception of Kokorákou at *35:Peristeriá*, all sites discussed as MHI-II (table 1.7, page 33) continued to be used in this period, and *8:Kissós* was also probably in use.

Preparation of materials

The preceding remarks on the use of pithoi for burials apply also to those pithoi used for burial at *13:Kamínia*, Vayená (*24:Englianós*) and *35:Peristeriá* south tomb 1; these pithoi do however seem smaller than those used in the earlier burial mounds.

The motivation for making and using the Cretan style spouted jar used for burial in the Vayená tholos at *24:Englianós* (**A1.*24*.31-32**), along with the deep cup found within it, which also imitates a Cretan type, is difficult to explain without a great deal of speculation. The imitation is clearly deliberate, inasmuch as two items are involved, suggesting that the intention in using these materials was to invoke or evoke the traditions of another place. These artefacts must also have been taken from some other context to be incorporated in the grave. In the funerary context their use may have strategically employed people's inference of meaning, perhaps in terms of symbolising relationships of the dead, the mourners, and the wider community, by evoking both the distant place that inspired their production and the more recent context from which they had been taken. The use of these artefacts may represent aspiration to association with Crete, perhaps the same sort of aspiration that brought LHI-style pottery into existence about this time.

A wide range and large amount of material culture has been recovered from the graves discussed in this section: not just material related to the adornment of the corpse, but also much material presumably used in graveside rituals - predominantly pottery in drinking and pouring shapes, but also other artefacts such as gold and silver cups and other vessels, obsidian and other stone arrowheads, various stone or bronze tools, bronze vessels such as cups, pans and cauldrons, and stone items particularly from the Kastrí (*62:Kíthira*) tombs. Some items such as obsidian arrowheads might easily have been made for the grave, and in some cases there is evidence of this (chapter eight); and although gold and silver vessels could hardly be made for individual funerals, their meaning can never have been domestic, and so any transformation of meaning involved in deposition in the grave must have been rather different from that involved in the deposition of domestic pottery. Not all material present in these tombs need be related to some special context: commonly found items such as Vafió cups and other pottery have a place

in the domestic repertoire. This indicates that in choice of material for funerary purposes, it remains possible and normal that objects from the routine of life may be called upon to become a part of the funeral.

The gold and silver vessels form an adjunct to a wider category of material, that of dress adornments for the corpse made of gold or other rare materials. These items occur in large amounts at *24:Englianós* Vayenás and tholos IV, *30:Nihória* Nikitopoúlou 5, *35:Peristeriá* MH/LH grave and tholos 3 (all described in the next section) and in smaller amounts at other sites. Much of the gold material is based on gold foil cutouts with repoussé decoration, perhaps material that could be produced quickly by a skilled craftsperson given raw material. The gold foil at least must have been held in readiness: the implication being that a rare resource was maintained ready for use. The mass-produced nature of the foil items (for example, A1.30.30 or A1.35.18) does suggest manufacture on a relatively large scale: just as tholos tombs provide for the burial of many persons, so perhaps the production of the material found within graves, particularly the gold material, may not have been linked with any specific person, but might form a resource somehow called upon when death made that necessary. The ability and desire to call on resources of gold and other precious material, although occasionally evidenced in the previous period, seems a new feature of the funerary customs of MHIII-LHI.

Preparation of the corpse

The investigation of these activities and other aspects of funerary behaviour is hampered in almost all contexts by the reuse of tombs. It is rare to find a context that represents the state of the material at the end of an interment, and that material not thereafter interfered with and employed in later acts; when such a context *is* found, it often dates later than the limit of this study. Whereas these later acts of interference in grave contexts are of great interest elsewhere in this thesis, they undermine the study of the preparation of the corpse for the funeral.

Evidence relevant to the preparation of the corpse is presented in the following table:

Site		Tomb	Context	Finds related to preparation of the corpse
7	Dhiódhia	Dhiódhia	None	Razor, three knives and four pins
10	Gouvalári	Tholos 1	None	Gold leaf, boars' tusks, sealstones and beads
10	Gouvalári	Tholos 2	None	Boars' tusks, bronze tools, weapons with gold rivets
10	Gouvalári	A1	None	Bronze knife
10	Gouvalári	A2	None	Bronze knife, crystal bead
10	Gouvalári	A10	None	Bronze knife and razor (or knife), other knives (**A1.*10*.33**)
10	Gouvalári	B	Pit	Two clay spindles
13	Kamínia	1	None	Bronze knife, tweezers and bead
13	Kamínia	4	Burial	Bronze tweezers
13	Kamínia	4	Pit	Clay spindle
17	Voïdhokiliá	Tholos	None	Gold foil; beads of sard, amber, amethyst; spindles or buttons of clay and steatite
17	Voïdhokiliá	Tholos	Child's skull	Four gold bands
23	Volimídhia	Kefalóvriso 3	Niche	Two knives, two grindstones & two pestles
23	Volimídhia	Kefalóvriso 3	Niche	Knife
23	Volimídhia	Kefalóvriso 5	Deposit on floor	Serpentine axe (**A1.*23*.14**)
23	Volimídhia	Kefalóvriso 6	None	Bronze pin (**A1.*23*.17**)
23	Volimídhia	Angelopoúlou 5	None	Miniature bronze double axe, amber, other bronze objects
23	Volimídhia	Koroníou 6	Side chamber	'Artisan's toolkit' (**A1.*23*.48**)
24	Englianós	-	-	*See text description*
27	Roútsi	Tholos 1	Niche	Type-A sword, silver fragments, gold pin, bronze crown or head-covering.
27	Roútsi	Tholos 2	Pit 2, lower section	Gold leaf, gold beads, other beads, gold ring, gold and silver pin with amethyst head, with bones
30	Nihória	Véves	None	Two gold papyrus cutouts, other small decorative elements, sealstones, small gold finds, seventeen steatite spindles, bronze disc
30	Nihória	Nikitopoúlou 4	Pit	Bronze pin
30	Nihória	Nikitopoúlou 4	Floor	Clay spindle, bronze ring, twelve beads
30	Nihória	Nikitopoúlou 5	Single context	Gold foil discs, other gold foil, miniature silver double axe, biconical silver beads, sard beads (**A1.*30*.30**)
30	Nihória	Akónes	Tomb 1	Type-A sword, dagger, seven beads, five spindles
30	Nihória	Akónes	Tomb 3	Two bronze tweezers, knife fragment
35	Peristeriá	-	-	*See text description*
43	Káto Samikó Klidhí	Mound A	Burial Δ	Bronze knife fragments
43	Káto Samikó Klidhí	Mound A	None	Spindles
43	Káto Samikó Klidhí	Mound 2	Grave 10	Bronze knife and clay spindles
43	Káto Samikó Klidhí	Tholos	None	Tweezers, bronze wire, knife fragments, sard beads, clay and stone spindles.
43	Káto Samikó Klidhí	Tholos	Pit	Boars' tusk fragments
46	Makrísia	Tholos/mound	Pit	Bronze knife and clay spindle
46	Makrísia	None	None	Three bronze knives, two bronze pins, several spindles

Site		Tomb	Context	Finds related to preparation of the corpse
58	Epídhavros Limirá	Ayia Triáhda tomb B	Pits	Buttons, bronze knife, spearhead
62	Kíthira	Tomb H	Grave 3	Bone pin
62	Kíthira	Tomb J	None	Clay weight and button
62	Kíthira	Recent excavation	None	Bronze blade fragment

Table 7.3. Material from possible MHIII-LHI contexts that can plausibly be interpreted as relating to the preparation of the corpse for burial. Many contexts are poorly recorded and may not date to MHIII-LHI: reference should be made to catalogue entries for information on under-represented sites such as *23:Volimídhia*, where many contexts are undated.

The material recorded in table 7.3 is a minimal list, excluding much of doubtful context or probable post-LHI date. It falls into several distinct categories: objects thought to relate to the clothing of the corpse (various clay and stone spindles, forming decorative weights for the shroud - Iakovidis 1977, and bronze and bone pins, used to keep the shroud in place), jewellery worn by the corpse (stone and metal beads, gold foil and gold cutouts, gold and bronze rings), objects related to the apparel or general presentation of the corpse (bronze knives and swords), and objects perhaps used in the direct bodily modification of the corpse (tweezers and razors).

The information about preparation available from the disposition of the corpse is also minimal. The majority of bones in these contexts has undergone secondary deposition and disarticulation. Moreover, small pottery items that might be considered as having contained perfumed oil or other organic susbstance for preparation purposes are also rare, although not unknown.

At *23:Volimídhia*, for example, known finds are limited to just the few objects listed in table 7.3: the evidence for the preparation of the corpse from the numerous dead of 34 tombs is rather disappointing. Artefacts that might have been part of the adornment of the corpse are relatively few; most skeletal material is disarticulated and therefore tells us little of its treatment before interment; and no objects that might have been directly related to the treatment of the corpse can be isolated. Much of this is due to the long use of the tombs, and the site is poorly recorded and published; it is also possible that traditions concerning the adornment of the corpse in the MHIII-LHI period may have been less elaborate at *23:Volimídhia* in comparison with some of the other sites described here. Something similar may be observed at *10:Gouvalári* mound A and at *13:Kamínia*.

At *24:Englianós* the Vayená tholos contained a number of fairly intact contexts, and so material can often be clearly related to individual dead. In pit 1 (**A1.*24*.23**) a single corpse (which may or may not have been articulated) was found within a pithos. Also in the pithos were four

silver half-diadems (**A1.*24*.36**) and various other gold or silver fragments that might have related to the clothing or adornment of the corpse, two or three ivory pins, perhaps associated with the clothing of the corpse, and an ivory plaque, thought to come from a sword handle, and so perhaps associated with the dress of the corpse (but see below, pages 249-251, on burial practices at this site). The rapier, knife and cauldron found outside the pithos are not directly associated with the corpse in the pithos, although they may have been originally. The contents of pit two as excavated relate to a late phase of use of the tomb, and so are irrelevant to this discussion. Within the area called 'pit 3', part of which certainly post-dates the period under discussion here (the upright palace style jar), a pithos of likely MHIII date (**A1.*24*.25**) and a Cretan-style spouted jar of MMIII-LMIA style (so of MHIII-LHI date; **A1.*24*.31-32**) were each found to contain a single burial. No items related to the treatment of the corpse were found in the spouted jar, although bent rapiers and other weapons deposited beside and under the jar might have originally been associated with the apparel of the corpse (**A1.*24*.26**). In the pithos there were a knife, four bronze pins and a boars' tusk that had been pierced: all plausibly to be associated with the dress of the corpse. Outside the pithos was a number of artefacts at varying distances; the presence of two further fragmentary pierced boars' tusks among these items makes it possible that all were originally used in the same act, although they were not necessarily all used directly on the corpse. In pit 4 (**A1.*24*.34**), where the remains of several individuals had been deposited in a disarticulated condition, finds included six knives or daggers, which again may have been part of the dress of a corpse, and a gold diadem, presumably placed around the head of a corpse. Elsewhere, in disturbed floor deposits, a knife, a pin, several seals and numerous buttons and beads were found. Of the early pottery found on the floor, only one item, an askos (Blegen *et alii* 1973, figure 234.19), reckoned by Lólos as probably LHI in date, might conceivably relate to actions upon the corpse: it is very small (height 6.8cm) and so held liquid required in only small quantities (so probably not for drinking), possibly oil (Lólos 1985, 327) or another substance with which to anoint the corpse, or perhaps colouring material.

The relatively intact contexts of the Vayená tholos do not present a single corpse in the condition of its original burial (burials in jars seem to have been disarticulated, and the jars themselves may have been set in their final positions in LHIIB): most of the intact contexts are the contexts of secondary interment. Nonetheless, the state of the corpse in these burials is hinted at quite strongly by some of the finds. All of them might have other uses: any of these artefacts might have been worn or used by the mourners rather than the dead. But the repeated discovery of these items in the context of deposition makes it very likely that some at least formed part of the raiment of the corpse. For some at least of the early burials in Vayená, therefore, we can speculate that the corpse had been previously laid out and transported to the

grave wearing a shroud, usually some item of weaponry, most likely a bead necklace, and in some cases gold or silver leaf adornments such as diadems or a boar's tusk. In every case the actions of the mourners as they go through the acts of interment would affect these items, as would later acts presumably taking place after the dissolution of the flesh.

Problems of context in tholos IV have been described in the catalogue entry. No intact burial contexts were found. However an impressive amount of material was found in the tomb and is listed and described in the excavation report (Blegen *et alii* 1973, 110-134; **A1.*24*.18**). In the stomion were found a golf foil rosette and a gold foil butterfly each with holes for attaching to clothing, part of a dagger, two amber beads and a glass paste button. On or within the blocking wall of the stomion were found three gold foil rosettes, two of them with attachment holes, a steatite button, and a bone pin, all likely originally part of the clothing of a corpse or of the mourners. Within the chamber numerous items, all gold, were noted by the excavator as 'personal adornment': two rings, a seal bead, figure of eight shield pendant, two other oblong 'spacer beads', two tubes with attached wire spirals, fourteen beads, six pendants, eight biconical beads restored as being part of a necklace, two earrings (one a cylinder with coils and one a rosette), one 'bead mounting' and one 'pin mounting', four cutout (repoussé) owls with attachment holes, two owls of foil, fragment of another possible bird in repoussé, twelve plate fragments, foil butterfly with attachment holes and fragments of other similar items, nine rosettes with attachment holes, 176 discs with attachment holes; another 115 were found without attachment holes, along with 52 rosettes without attachment holes, and these were interpreted by the excavator as related to the adornment of furniture rather than clothing, along with miscellaneous other fragments of foil. Other items, non-gold, likely to have formed part of clothing or dress include a silver ring, a bronze ring, fragments of bronze pins, various bronze beads and studs, numerous rivets that may have belonged to swords or daggers, a blade of a sword or dagger, a knife or dagger hilt, four sealstones, 246 amethyst beads presumably from necklaces, three carnelian and various other beads, two buttons, four small steatite discs, two pommels, an axe head in serpentine, 355 amber beads and two 'spacer beads', again presumably from necklaces, some pieces of ivory that might relate to clothing (but are much more likely to relate to furniture), a 'bone spacer', three whole and 18 fragmentary bone pins, eleven faience beads, and 27 paste beads.

This vast catalogue of material, none coming from a recognisable context, may represent the burial activities of one or more chronological horizons within the LHI-IIIA period of use for the tomb. There is good reason to believe that some or most of the material relates to earlier rather than later periods, since much of it has counterparts at other early sites such as *35:Peristerá*

tholos 3 or the Mycenae shaft graves. It is clear that at some point in the history of use of the tomb it happened, indeed it was perhaps normal, that certain acts occurred involving considerable adornment of corpse, mourners or officiating persons, or all of them, using materials that we would consider to be unusual and precious, such as gold and silver, ivory and amethyst, which in some cases at least had probably been made for funerary purposes. Although much evidence is presented in this chapter for traditions concerning the adornment of the corpse, quite extraordinary embellishments of that tradition are evidenced in this tomb (and *35:Peristeriá* below); but they remain embellishments of an existing tradition, not different practices, just as the mode of burial in a tholos tomb is part of a wider tradition, even if this is one the largest tombs of this period.

At *35:Peristeriá* the 'MH/LH grave' contained a number of discrete reinterred bone groups, each group representing one or more individuals, as well as groups of items or individual items on the floor of the tomb. In many cases items are clearly associated with specific bone groups; but since all of these interments are secondary, none of the items is now directly related to the condition of any given corpse at burial. The artefacts all point to ostentatious clothing, presumably for the corpse: the earliest group included eight gold foil circles with papyrus-shaped pendant sections (**A1.*35*.18**), each attached to a tube that probably allowed for them to be affixed to clothing (their secondary treatment had resulted in their being gathered in a goblet), with a type-A sword (which had later been burned and bent: **A1.*35*.19**). Another bone group was associated with the following items: 22 gold discs, a bone pin, six gold foil bands, three more gold discs, a clay spindle, four more gold bands. Further items related to other bone groups include a gold band, a bronze knife, a bronze chisel, a gold bead, and other fragments of gold silver and bronze, including the scattered elements of a gold necklace.

In complete contrast, despite mostly again containing secondary disarticulated bone deposits, South Tholos 1 contained virtually no artefacts beyond pottery items. Of these, early shapes are all associated with drinking (**A1.*35*.31**).

Aside from the pit in tholos tomb 3, finds thought to have originally come from the chamber include fragments of gold leaf, a rivet indicating the presence of a weapon such as a sword or a knife, and an amber bead. These probably indicate funerary ceremonies involving the use of this material on the corpse. The pit itself contained a large quantity of gold leaf, although perhaps much of that was used to line the pit rather than as part of the dress of the corpse. Other finds included a gold band and numerous gold impressed items such as tritons, birds, rosettes and insects, gold wire and gold tubes, and beads of amethyst and other material (**A1.*35*.49-50**).

In each case examined above it is possible that artefacts were not used in the adornment of the corpse; items assumed to have been attached to clothing, for example, might have been associated with the clothing of the living rather than the dead. Weaponry, assumed to be deposited with the dead as part of the apparel of the corpse, might equally have been used in some other manner and deposited as part of some other act. Small pot artefacts that might have been used to hold perfumed oil might have had some other purpose. However, the amount of material, the repetition of forms, and its repeated recovery from different contexts, tombs and sites suggests that its use was reproduced time and again. Specific examples from elsewhere, especially the contemporary shaft graves at Mycenae, make it clear that this material was used as an almost formulaic 'set' that went with the corpse: a shroud decorated with gold foil artefacts, and an accompaniment of weaponry. The shaft graves represent this material in a (relatively) undisturbed context, and provide a model for its use in the graves under discussion here. Occasional discoveries of material still in its original association with the corpse provide strong backing for this: the gold bands associated with the child skull in *17:Voïdhokiliá*; items found in the pithos burials of the Vayená tholos (*24:Englianós*); or from later sites discussed below, artefacts in the cist at *54:Vafió* and artefacts associated with the intact burials of *27:Roútsi* tomb 2.

Evidence for preparation of the corpse in the excavated sites of the preceding MHI-II period is weak; only a few cases of artefacts found with the dead were noted: this does seem to change in the MHIII-LHI period. However the practice of adorning the corpse almost certainly *was* practised at least occasionally in earlier periods, as evidenced by the few artefacts of table 7.2 (page 202), and perhaps by some of the simpler graves (table 7.1, page 194). The earliest tombs under discussion in this section, such as some of the tholoi in *10:Gouvalári* mound A, some or all of the *13:Kamínia* tholoi, the *16:Korifásio* tholos, some of the *23:Volimídhia* tombs and some of the *30:Nihória* tombs present little evidence in regard to the preparation of the corpse. This does not follow for all early tombs: MH contexts in the Vayená (*24:Englianós*) tholos and probable MH contexts in the MH/LH grave at *35:Peristeriá* do provide much evidence in this respect. Nonetheless the material suggests a situation where early on the preparatory acts on the corpse were quite minimal; at some point there is a sudden increase in these activities, perhaps best seen as paralleling the already noted quite sudden increase of tholos tombs in numbers and dimensions. The social conditions that allowed for the investment in the architecture of tholos tombs also allowed for investment in the preparation of the corpse with material such as gold, with bronze weaponry, with semi-precious stone necklaces, and possibly with other rare organic material such as perfumed oil. In both cases (the proliferation of the

tholos form and the dazzling embellishment of the corpse) pre-existing traditional practices were reworked in the practices that we are discussing here. The adornment of the corpse was not a new practice, but the available resources and the will to deploy those resources in this arena was new.

These practices entailed in some (perhaps relatively few) cases quite spectacular laying out ceremonies, with the corpse clothed in raiment of gold discs, foil or other shapes, wearing necklaces and bracelets of semi-precious stone, the head crowned with a diadem, and at his or her side a sword or a dagger. This would clearly have a public impact: even if only a select few were present at the laying out ceremony, it is possible that others might be allowed to see the corpse later, or see it as it was later taken to the grave. These events must have been special: not just to the mourners, to whom the event would be special with or without the accompaniment of precious material, but to the entire community, perhaps to quite a wide community. The investment of material such as this in the corpse can only have been intended as a public event.

The material used in adorning the corpse falls into two basic categories: the purely decorative, and the decorative-with-function. Most is purely decorative: all the gold, semi-precious stones, and other jewellery. The shroud, functional in the sense of covering the corpse (perhaps wrapping it tightly), might also be intricately decorated, and forms the background for the jewellery. The weaponry falls into the category of decorative-with-function. The arming of the corpse is a powerful image, although exactly what that image was intended to convey is not obvious. A number of explanations is possible: weaponry might be a rank or status symbol; it might symbolise a warrior aristocracy; it might symbolise an ideal of human life; or it might be related to hunting activities. Although weaponry is quite common, other items such as tools are rare (though not unknown); the preference for weaponry above other objects is clear.

There are few intact skeletons, and descriptions of the state of the skeleton are often brief or non-existent, so it seems impossible to comment on the actual treatment of the body (as opposed to its adornment). Although it is often assumed that the corpse was generally interred in a supine position, and this would make sense in terms of it wearing a shroud and carrying weaponry, it may be that not all corpses were treated in this way; those buried in the pithoi of *35:Peristeriá* south tholos 1 and *24:Englianós* Vayená were presumably contracted.

Other acts outside the grave

No information.

THE LHI-IIA, LHIIA AND LHIIB PERIODS (TABLES 1.12-1.15, PAGE 34-35)

Preparation of materials

This may be an appropriate point to consider the phenomenon of LHIIA 'palace style' pottery, and in particular the palace style jars found in many tombs, sometimes in considerable quantity. Palace style jars have long been a marker of the LHIIA period for tomb assemblages, and have been found at many sites: the large tholoi at *10:Gouvalári* (**A1.*10*.46-48**), *12:Fitiés* 2, tholos 1 at *18:Tragána*, tholoi IV & V (**A1.*24*.30**) at *24:Englianós*, *27:Roútsi* tholos 2 (**A1.*27*.22** right) and probably also tholos 1, tholoi I (**A1.*35*.76**) & II at *35:Peristeriá*, *38:Vasilikó* (**A1.*38*.6**), all three tholoi at *44:Kakóvatos* (**A1.*44*.11-12**), *51:Análipsis* large tholos (**A1.*51*.4**), the large chamber tomb at *52:Pellána*, and *54:Vafió*. This list includes almost all of the larger tombs in the study area, and would generally equate to those regarded as the 'richer' tombs; given the problems of differential survival of artefacts, the matter may not be so clear cut, but in general palace style jars form part of the tradition and custom evidenced in the larger scale and more lavish ceremonies; there are no reported palace style jars at *23:Volimídhia* for example, or in the small tholoi at *10:Gouvalári* or *13:Kamínia*.

In Crete such artefacts have been recovered from palatial contexts (Betancourt 1985, 155-158; Niemeier 1985). Evans derived both the basic form and the function of the vessels from the great middle Minoan storage pithoi of the palace magazines (Evans 1928, 426). At Knosós they were found both in the palace and surrounding structures, and in funerary contexts (for example, the Isópata 'Royal Tomb': **A4.28**). Mainland examples were mostly or exclusively made on the mainland (Niemeier distinguishes three imported examples on stylistic grounds: 1984), however, and seem almost exclusively to derive from funerary contexts (some sherds were noted at the Menelaion: Catling 1977, 29).

While the typology, derivation and decoration of the jars have all been carefully studied (Niemeier 1985), there are few comments on their function in general, or on their role in Mycenaean funerals in particular. Storage would seem an obvious function, as noted by Evans, but it is equally clear that these were hardly everyday vessels. They were made by specialist

potters, in the case of the mainland very clearly in imitation of Cretan examples. In emulating the form the potters were not only reproducing for their patrons the item itself, but were creating artefactual referents to a particular context: Minoan Crete, and more closely the palace of Knosós itself. In investing time and effort in the creation of these vessels, the potters and their patrons seem to have been interested in creating a symbolic link to features of the Minoan social system. This would appear to be the motivation for the creation of these vessels, and must form part of the motivation for their disposal in the tomb in the public context of a funeral.

The jars are large (up to a metre or more in height) and finely painted: they require skill and knowledge both in potting and painting. On the analogy of the pithos jars mentioned in chapter seven, jars would have taken ten to twenty days to create. That so few mainland examples are known indicates that relatively few people had the knowledge to produce these vessels, and that production was always small scale to answer the needs of a limited number of people.

The function of the vessels is most likely storage. The rims are not well suited for pouring, but ladles or cups may have been used, and so the storage of liquids such as water, wine or oil is quite likely; they may also have been used for the storage of dry goods. The context of storage would hardly be the everyday: they were not used to store the annual harvest. Instead, they must have been used for storage in a special context: holding the olive oil (for example) used for feasts, or dedicated to a god, or in any other way set aside from the ordinary. The lack of settlement sites with examples of such jars *in situ* even makes it possible that they were constructed primarily with a use in the tomb in mind (but not for a specific burial, bearing in mind the minimum amount of time required for their construction).

I would suggest therefore that these vessels at the time of a funeral would have been regarded in much the same light as other difficult to procure vessels. Their role in the funeral may well have been to hold something like wine, a small amount of which could have been drunk during the ceremony. It is also possible that they may have been used to store the blood of sacrifice as part of the funerary ritual (the vessel is not quite as open-shaped as would be ideal for this). In some cases they may have been set within the tomb and thought of as permanent additions to the architecture and resources within, to be called upon at each ceremony or reopening of the tomb. Perhaps the principal role of the artefact and its content was as symbol of the social structures inhabited by the mourners and masters of the ceremony.

Preparation of the corpse

In the cist at *54:Vafió* Tsoúndas found an intact deposit that he took to be the remains of a single extended inhumation. The anthropological material had apparently completely decayed in the ground, but the finds were so arranged that Tsoúndas was able to suggest the exact position of some items in relation to the corpse. Thus, as far as items concerned with the dress of the corpse are concerned, some 80 amethyst beads were recovered from the assumed area of the neck of the corpse, and were thought to have formed a necklace of two rows, with two sealstones that possibly formed the centrepiece of each row; a gold inlaid dagger was placed perhaps at or below the left shoulder of the dead, with some other small gold objects. At the position of each hand were placed similar objects, including little piles of sealstones that might conceivably have formed bracelets, and there were three rings, one of gold, one of silver, and one of iron - the gold ring came from the left hand. A sword and six bronze knives are also mentioned. The many other objects seem to have been placed in the grave with or after the corpse (selection of objects: **A1.*54*.13-14**).

The intact deposits of *27:Roútsi* tholos 2 seem mostly to be of LHIIA date (see catalogue entry): there are three more or less intact burial contexts. In one pit, which had been used before for burial, a skeleton was laid. At some later time the lower half was removed, but the upper half and its context survived intact. Relevant material includes two inlaid gold daggers (**A1.*27*.23**), one found near the shoulder just as the *54:Vafió* example, the other on a 'platform' at the skeleton's left hand, with thirteen gold buttons (**A1.27.21**). Pieces of amber formed a necklace. Another dagger, bronze but decorated with gold, was found near the left hand. A second pit (**A1.*27*.18**) contained an articulated skeleton with a necklace, and a glass bead at the right arm, perhaps part of a bracelet or armlet. A burial on the floor, perhaps laid on its side, had piled up by its side ten swords and daggers as well as various beads (**A1.*27*.19-20**).

These contexts suggest that there is little change between LHI and LHIIA in terms of the kinds of materials that might be used to adorn the corpse: beads (around neck or arm), weaponry, and jewellery in the form of rings, might often be a part of the raiment of the corpse; other contexts elsewhere (particularly *35:Peristeriá* tholos II, **A1.*35*.59-60**, and *44:Kakóvatos* A) show that gold foil and gold impressed items were also used, as in the immediately preceding period.

Chamber tomb E8 at *24:Englianós* contained two pits (**A1.*24*.39**): in one, an extended skeleton was associated with two beads and a terracotta whorl. This context was intact, so in this case the adornment of the corpse seems to have been much less lavish: the solitary whorl can hardly have been used on its own as a clothing weight, and so was perhaps displayed on the shroud of the dead; the two beads were presumably used as jewellery. Of three pottery items, one was an alabastron, possibly a container for perfumed oil that anointed the corpse. A second pit contained redeposited material, again dated LHII: save pottery, the material present was limited to a bronze knife and a terracotta button; at least four people were represented in the contents of the pit. In these cases it is clear that similar ideas governed the treatment of the corpse, but that the amount and 'value' of the material employed was much less.

In south tholos 1 at *35:Peristeriá* (**A1.*35*.25**) the final three inhumations were extended on the floor and date to LHII (perhaps all three date to LHIIB). Each was associated with a single pot, in two cases an alabastron (the third pot is not described); no other finds are mentioned. In these cases, then, there is little evidence for the adornment of the corpse, perhaps a significant observation, in that this widespread practice might not be universal. Having said that, I suspect that fundamental element in the adornment of the corpse was the shroud, which being organic would not have survived; moreover the presence of the alabastra would suggest the use of perfumed oils. Hence these burials may not be completely anomalous.

35:Peristeriá south tholos 1 does however allow another possibility: since evidence is lacking for preparation of the corpse in all of its contexts, it is possible that slightly different traditions concerning treatment of the dead were maintained through different tombs, even at the same site; moreover, the unusual presence of funerary pithoi in south tholos 1 also provides a link with the tumuli of the middle helladic period, represented by the nearby Kokorákou mound.

In general, where disturbed contexts include material of LHII date, the kinds of items found with these contexts does not differ greatly from that observed in intact contexts, or in LHI contexts. The general conclusion from the evidence is therefore that the acts of preparation on the corpse, and the preparation of materials to be used in this way, do not differ substantially from that observed in the previous period, and that, as observed for the previous period, while the acts may differ in quantity and quality of material used, the same basic precepts are present in all contexts where observations can be made.

Other acts outside the grave

No information.

Chapter Eight

Acts at and within the grave

'Simpler' graves (table 1.2, page 29)

Movement

By definition, the simpler graves under consideration here are non-monumental (some sizes for graves at *37:Málthi* are given in table 6.1). They were not designed to permit the entry of the living: their design is based on the corpse. They are generally large enough to contain a corpse, and rarely are they made much larger than required. Although it is possible that one or two of the mourners during a funeral might get into a cist or pit in order to assist in interring the body, this would not be necessary as the body could easily be manoeuvred in from above; in any case, many of these graves are very shallow, making the presence of someone inside to help redundant.

The architecture of simpler graves therefore constitutes a structuring element of funerary practices: their design enforces certain basic modes of action. These are that the mourners should gather at or near the grave (chapter five, page 108) as opposed to in it, and that most or all funerary activity should occur outside the grave, the involvement of the grave being limited to receiving the corpse and other artefacts as they are lowered from above.

Engagement with the material past

There is some evidence for the discovery, intentional or otherwise, of earlier funerary remains, and how these could be dealt with. The most striking example is that of grave A31 at *57:Ayos*

Stéfanos which contained two skeletons, one earlier than the other (**A1.*57*.7**). The bones of the earlier skeleton had been disarticulated, presumably at the time of the second burial, and the skull removed. The earlier skeleton was meaningful to those arranging the later burial: they might after all have simply left it in place and interred the new corpse beside or above it. Instead they involved themselves with the bones, disarticulating them (to what extent is not reported) and taking away the skull. Whether or not they deliberately sought to reuse a grave is unclear, and the meaning of their action on the first skeleton is also unknown: if the skull were seen as somehow representative of the presence of the dead, its removal might have been either to exploit that presence elsewhere, or to protect the current ceremony or the recently dead from that presence. The meaning of these acts is not available to us: but we can be sure that they were meaningful.

After the second interment the sequence of events is unclear. The cover slabs were found out of place, which may be associated with the second interment or with the acts carried out next to the grave - these seem to have involved burning and perhaps sacrifice. The excavator interpreted the evidence as indicating a feast while the tomb was open and then further 'burnt offerings' when the tomb was shut. This grave offers a unique (for this sample of sites) instance of post-interment ritual acts.

Other graves showed evidence that the remains of the past had been interfered with. Despite relatively few multiple burials, as many as 22 skeletons at *57:Ayos Stéfanos* were disarticulated when found. A few of these are suggested to be the result of modern disturbance, but in most cases the excavator postulates that these secondary burials result from grave reuse. If this is the case, then it is clear that it was not unusual to either deliberately or accidentally open an older grave and remove some or all of the content, reburying close nearby. This suggests that encounters with the remains of previous burials were a fairly normal part of the burying tradition at *57:Ayos Stéfanos*, and may have been to some extent anticipated. This strengthens observations made in chapter five about the location of graves.

It also suggests questions concerning people's understandings of the material remains of humanity. The removal of bones and reburying perhaps indicates a perceived difference between the fleshed and defleshed corpse, a sense that it is somehow acceptable, or proper, to remove, disarticulate and rebury bones, sometimes with other artefacts presumably from the original burial. The physical transformation of the corpse from flesh to bones may mirror a social transformation from recently dead to ancestral. This would explain why, on digging in the cemetery and discovering a previous burial, it was acceptable to continue digging, and prioritise

the recently dead by removing the older bones: burial in a defined grave was important while the bones were fleshed, but after decomposition of the flesh bones could be gathered and reburied in a smaller pit, and might have been conceived not as an individual but as a part of the community of ancestors known to be scattered throughout that particular area. It is even conceivable that, as in modern Greece, graves may have been reopened following custom specifically to remove and treat the bones, ending in a reburial: not all burials were treated this way, however.

At *37:Málthi* there is also considerable evidence for the disarticulation of earlier burials. Six graves (6, 15, 20, 21, 22, 28: **A1.*37*.3-7**), all of children, contained single disarticulated skeletons. The excavator offered no possible explanations for the conditions of the skeletons, which in most cases were smashed as well as disarticulated. One might suspect that later building or even cultivation might be responsible their condition. Similar explanations may apply to graves 25 and 40, where in each case two child skeletons were found in a disarticulated and broken up condition. Grave 36 similarly contained two child burials, perhaps in this case interfered with deliberately after the second burial. Grave 32 was a cist tomb containing the remains of at least seven children, all mixed up. As Valmin recognised (1938, 230), this tomb was used for the redeposition of material brought from elsewhere. Similarly, grave 37 contained the mixed remains of three adults (or two adults and one child), in this case possibly associated with remains of burning. Grave 38 similarly was a pit with the mixed remains of eight individuals along with animal bones and evidence of burning. Again here there is perhaps slight evidence for a secondary burial custom as suggested for *57:Ayos Stéfanos* above.

In summary, at *37:Málthi* as at *57:Ayos Stéfanos* while the majority of burials are placed in new graves and not interfered with after deposition, there is evidence in a minority of cases for the reopening of graves, disarticulation of remains, second burials in graves, the collection and reburial of remains, and (once) feasting at the graveside.

Acts involving materials brought to the grave

At *57:Ayos Stéfanos* artefacts (other than those already discussed in relation to the adornment of the corpse: chapter seven, table 7.1, page 194) are deposited in eighteen graves. In the following table, derived from table A1.57.1, artefacts already discussed in relation to the adornment of the corpse have been removed:

Grave	Grave type	Number of individuals	Adult/ child	Sex	Date	Items with burial
A1	pit	1	child	male	MH	2 MH pots
A2		1	infant		MH	2 fragmentary MH pots
A7	pit	1	child		MH	MH fragments not definitely associated
A19	cist	1	adult	female?	MH?	Pot (MH?)
A23	cist	1	adult	female?	MH	5 MH pots
A28	cist	2	mixed	male?	MH/LH	35 obsidian blades & one flint
A29	cist	1	adult		MH/LH?	Shells
A31	cist	2	adult		MH	3 MH pots
A33		1	infant		MH	MH pot
B6	pit/stone surround	1	adult		MH	2 MH pots; 2 obsidian arrowheads, one flint saw
B11	cist?	1	infant		MH	2 MH pots
D4		1	adult	male	LHI	LHI pot
D7	cist	1	adult	female	MH	2 pots (Minoan?)
D13	pit/stone surround	1	adult	male	LHI?	flint saw above burial
D14	pit/stone surround	1	adult		LHI ?	LHI pot (vafio cup)
D22		1	infant		LHI?	Sheep or goat bones
TT7-3	cist	1	adult	female	MH	MH sherds; lead strip

Table 8.1. Graves at *57:Ayos Stéfanos*, showing only artefacts not directly related to the adornment of the corpse.

The range of artefacts is limited: predominantly pottery with odd examples of shells, animal bones or worked stone. This, and the fact that these graves are only a small proportion of the total, shows that deposition of artefacts in the grave was relatively rare, and so funerary rites involving artefacts might also have been rare. The artefacts and burials are not well enough dated to be able to suggest that artefacts were more used in one or other period.

The pottery artefacts are listed in the following table:

Grave	Pottery finds
A1	two handled jar (9.4cm); large open shape like bowl or goblet
A2	small pithos; jar
A7	bowl (not securely associated)
A19	jar (10.5cm)
A23	minyan goblet (12.5cm high 12.3cm wide); cylindrical cup (6.1cm); biconical jar; one handled cup (7.3cm)
A31	spouted cup (3.4cm); one-handled cup (7cm); two-handled deep cup (8.9cm)
A33	one handled cup (8cm)
B6	cup (7.6cm); jar (18.5cm)
B11	fragments including pithos
D4	LHI cup (4.2cm)
D7	Minoan jug and cup
D14	Vafió cup
TT7-3	Sherds

Table 8.2. Pottery finds in graves at *57:Ayos Stéfanos*. Dimensions in brackets indicate heights except where stated.

Of these 23 items, at least 10 are cups, there are six jars or jugs, three bowls or goblets, two pithoi, and two unidentified. The pithoi are likely to be burial vessels. The implication of the other items is that pottery artefacts were used in pouring or drinking rituals at the graveside: the jars and jugs may have held liquid poured into cups or as libation, and the cups, bowls and goblets may have been used for consuming the liquids. The drinking shapes vary in size: larger examples may have been passed from person to person to share in the toast.

It may be objected that the deposition of these items in the grave was not as a consequence of their use in funerary rituals, but that they might represent either the property of the dead or be 'funeral gifts' or 'offerings'. If the mourners interpreted the objects in this way, there would be no functional necessity for objects related to pouring and drinking liquids to be chosen to fulfil this aspect of the funeral; but the unity of theme in these objects comes from their function, which suggests strongly that they represent not a collection of offerings or the property of the dead, but rather the means of carrying out a particular ritual involving pouring and drinking liquids.

Conclusions regarding the use of artefacts found in the *57:Ayos Stéfanos* graves are that

- certain graves show evidence for pouring or drinking ceremonies;
- in other cases such ceremonies may have taken place without the objects used being given up to the grave - perhaps these ceremonies might take place before the burial, or after the closure of the grave;
- very few graves show any evidence for artefacts that are neither related to the adornment of the corpse nor pouring and drinking ceremonies.

At *37:Málthi* only six graves were clearly associated with artefacts. In grave 4 there is a 'sword pommel of ivory', which looks less impressive than it sounds (**A1.*37.9***): about 4cm in diameter, and as Valmin suggests (1938, 361) perhaps attached to a stick rather than a sword. In grave 1 a feeding bottle (possibly LHIIIA in date) was placed next to the head of an infant. If this item was used as its name suggests, then its inclusion in the grave may perhaps be interpreted as an emotionally significant burial with the child of an object very intimately associated with it in the routines of everyday life. The item might however represent once again a pouring shape, perhaps (since it is 'small') of a liquid such as scented oil.

Grave 24 at *37:Málthi* was the extended burial of a child in a stone-surrounded pit or cist. Another feeding bottle[1] and a goblet were found here (**A1.*37*.8**). Again the feeding bottle might have been associated with the child in life, or it may be that it held liquids used in the funeral, and the goblet is again a drinking shape.

Grave 23 at *37:Málthi* contained more pottery than any other (**A1.*37*.8**). There were three goblets of similar size and shape to that in grave 24, a smaller cup, and a very unusual double jug (described by Valmin: 1938, 314-315 and by Lólos: 1985, 363-364). There is no exact parallel for the double jug, which makes it possible that it was made specifically for funerary or other unusual contexts. Its shape would allow for one to hold it aloft, as long as it was not too full, then turn it through almost 180° to pour into one of the goblets or the cup.

At *55:Amikléon* two of the three graves excavated by Tsoúndas contained pottery. The first grave, a slate-built cist, contained two middle helladic cups; the other contained two early Mycenaean cups. Although no further information is available, again here the emphasis is clearly on drinking utensils.

Therefore, although evidence is lacking from most graves, where artefacts (other than those related to the adornment of the corpse) are found in the grave, very often these are pottery items associated with pouring and drinking ceremonies. In those few cases where other artefacts have been found (such as obsidian blades, or perhaps the feeding bottles at *37Málthi*), special interpretations related to that particular instance of burial must be sought.

Deposition of material and corpse

Data from *57:Ayos Stéfanos* and *37:Málthi* can again be examined to determine the circumstances of deposition for the material found in the graves[2]. The following table sets out the data for *57:Ayos Stéfanos*:

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[1] Lólos calls it a 'small basket-handled bowl supplied with an oblique side-spout of tubular form' (1985, 151).

[2] The consequential deposition of material associated with the adornment of the corpse has been discussed in chapter seven and is not repeated in this chapter.

Grave	Item	Circumstances
A1	Two-handled jar	Near head of contracted skeleton of child
A1	Bowl or goblet	Unknown
A2	Jar	Below skeletal remains
A7	Bowl	50cm from skull, not securely associated
A19	Jar	Beside pelvis of contracted adult female skeleton
A23	Minyan goblet	Left knee of extended adult skeleton; set on base but slightly tilted
A23	Cylindrical cup	Inside left elbow of extended adult skeleton; lying on its side, facing away from elbow[3]; facing and touching biconical jar
A23	Biconical jar	Inside left elbow of extended adult skeleton, perhaps originally on trunk of skeleton
A23	One-handled cup	Outside left elbow of extended adult skeleton
A28	Obsidian flakes	Southwest corner of grave
A28	Flint scraper	Southwest corner of grave
A28	Bone pin	Southwest corner of grave
A29	Shells	Near skull
A31	Spouted cup	Left wrist of articulated skeleton
A31	One-handled cup	South end of grave
A31	Two-handled deep cup	Under pelvis of articulated skeleton
A31	Obsidian blades	Unknown
A33	One-handled cup	Associated with disarticulated bones
B6	Cup	Unknown
B6	Jar	Unknown
B6	Flint saw	Unknown
B6	Obsidian	Unknown
D4	LHI cup	Associated with disarticulated bones
D7	Jug	Right hand of contracted adult female skeleton
D7	Cup	Right hand of contracted adult female skeleton
D14	Vafió cup	Between right elbow and trunk of extended adult male skeleton
D22	Sheep or goat bones	Near infant skull (no other bones preserved)
TT7-3	Sherds	Unknown
TT7-3	Lead strip	Under extended skeleton of adult female

Table 8.3. Locations and associations of artefacts from graves listed in table 8.1.

The detailed recording of the *57:Ayos Stéfanos* graves shows that artefacts were generally carefully placed in the grave, and often in relation to the corpse (so *after* the interment of the corpse). In many ways the deposition of this material forms a clear prelude to the closure of the grave. The interment over, those items that had been used to structure the acts of the mourners were themselves interred. The best example is grave A23 (**A1.*57*.9**), where three of the pottery items were placed close to each other and at the left elbow of the corpse. The pattern of deposition here suggests that the objects were placed in contact with each other and perhaps resting on organic matter that later decayed. The skeleton was to one side in the grave, while the artefacts were to the other, indicating that in the act of interring the corpse, thought was given also to the deposition of the pottery. It is possible that all of the items were placed upright, each being turned over to some extent in the passage of time or at the moment earth was thrown into the grave. It may be that the items were placed in the grave by persons standing on the west long side, although this is not essential. The larger pot is separate from the

[3] Hence not tied to the elbow (this cup was perforated), but perhaps tied to clothing.

smaller ones, perhaps deposited by people standing at different places over the grave. This may have related to different groups using different items, or perhaps to different rituals associated with different items.

Grave A33 was a disarticulated burial associated with a one-handled cup. The cup may have been placed with the skeleton in its original grave and moved with the bones at a later date, or the cup may have been deposited when the bones were moved. Similarly grave D4 was the disarticulated remains of an adult skeleton associated with a small cup. As with A33 the cup may have been placed with the corpse when first buried or as part of the act of moving it to another spot.

Objects other than pottery also betray some of the circumstances of their deposition. The obsidian cache in grave A28, along with a flint scraper and bone pin, were all found in one corner of the grave. They had presumably been deposited in a bag of leather or some other organic which later decayed. Their rôle may have been deliberate deposition.

At *37:Málthi*, grave 4, the ivory 'pommel' was found at the head of the child; in grave 1 the feeding bottle was similarly placed next to the head of the infant; in grave 24 the feeding bottle was placed at the left knee of the skeleton, while a goblet was placed at the other side: both seemed to have been placed upright. In grave 23, containing two extended child skeletons, the pots were placed in the corners of the grave and the double jug was placed right of the legs. The pots seem to have been placed in the grave after the burial of the second child, or moved during that burial, to judge from their positions in the corner away from the skeleton.

To summarise the evidence, in most graves that contained deliberately or transformationally deposited artefacts, the corpse seems to have been deposited first, and the artefacts placed within the grave in relation to the corpse. Instances of deliberate destruction of artefacts are few, and in some cases where disturbed bones are relocated, objects were carefully deposited or redeposited with them.

The deposition of the corpse in these graves is potentially the most significant act of the funeral, and certainly forms the main intended outcome of the performance. In itself, stripped of all the other actions described elsewhere, the act of deposition is a simple one: the body would in most cases simply have been lowered into the grave. Some arrangement of the corpse would have taken place if not completely covered by a funeral shroud; in some cases the arrangement of the corpse will have been principally carried out in the preparatory phase.

Movement

A mound or tumulus is by definition raised above the surrounding landscape. Its edge, whether defined by a peribolos (*35:Peristeriá* Kokorákou, *17:Voïdhokiliá*, and possibly *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia*) or simply by the change in slope, is the liminal point between tomb and wider landscape. It is in effect a platform, onto which participants must climb in order to take part in activities. Thus the mound allows for a division in funerary practices: those taking part or closely involved gathered on the mound, those merely watching scattered around and below (the open nature of the architecture allows for free passage between the two zones, so one should be wary of suggesting a strict division in funeral participants). The architecture raises up the actions of those involved so as to make them more prominent, accessible and open to recognition and observation.

The actual graves, although raised up above the landscape, remain holes in the ground: pits, cists, or most commonly pithos burials. The latter case is admittedly rather more complex (and is considered below), but ultimately the action of burial remains the lowering of the corpse into the grave while the mourners gather around above. The effect of the mound is to raise focus of action above the surroundings and divide the mourners into groups.

Engagement with the material past

In approaching a mound intending to inter the newly dead within, those involved acknowledged the older dead already interred within and, in reusing the mound, reproduced and transformed traditions of practice associated with it. The use of an existing mound for a funeral is therefore in itself an act of engagement with the past. Overall numbers of burial acts associated with these mounds are however relatively small: at *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia* for example, about 20 individuals are represented among the MH burials[4]. That engagement with the past was not therefore an essential part of the disposal of a corpse for these communities: other corpses must have been located elsewhere.

[4] Excluding those burials regarded by the excavators as post-bronze age. Even including those, however, the total would probably not rise above about 35 (exact numbers are impossible due to the recording of the material).

At a more specific level, at times people decided not only to reuse the mound, but also occasionally to reopen and reuse existing graves within the mound. In most cases this is clearly associated with the interment of a corpse, but in a few cases may be associated with some other activity, as detailed below.

At *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia*, pithos 19 contained the remains of two individuals (**A1.*14*.22**). The original interment in the pithos had been disarticulated at the time of the insertion of the second corpse. In this case, then, we can say that the mourners chose a particular pithos, opened it up, interfered with the remains within, inserted the corpse, and then closed the pithos again. They may have dug out and reburied the pithos as part of this activity: unlike most of the pithoi at *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia*, found set radially high in the mound, this pithos was buried rather deeply in it. If this was its original position, then at the time it was reused those who used it must have somehow known its position in the mound, since it would neither have been obvious nor easy to relocate, as the others would have been. Therefore it may well be the case that, when it was reused it was moved from some point higher in the mound (or indeed from another mound) and placed in this deeper spot.

Slightly different evidence is presented with pithos 5 of the same mound, which contained an articulated, contracted skeleton, at the knees of which was a second, smaller skull. This skull may represent either the remains of an original burial, interfered with to facilitate interment of a second burial, or it may represent an item introduced into the pithos at the time of interment or later. The latter possibility implies that at times it might be acceptable to open graves and interfere with the remains in an act not directly related to a new interment.

None of the other pithoi of this mound is specifically recorded as showing evidence for use after the initial interment; however, the recording of the 1950s excavations is non-specific, and so it may be that others were so used. Further evidence is provided by the other graves of the mound, which are problematic in that their chronologies are not well determined. However, one of the cist graves is noted as containing a number of skulls. It is at least possible that these skulls were gathered from the other graves of the mound, although the period of this event is unknown. Others of the cists (6, 9 & 10) contained disarticulated bones, and one of them (number 22) contained clear evidence for two separate events: one articulated burial post-dates a disarticulated burial. The uncertainty over the chronology of these graves means that they cannot be taken as clear evidence for middle helladic practice.

At *17:Voïdhokiliá* two of the pithoi showed clear evidence of reuse. Pithos 4 (**A1.*17*.18-19**) contained two burials, one contracted and one disarticulated, suggesting that the disarticulation of the bones formed part of the interment of the second individual. Pithos 6 (**A1.*17*.21**) contained a layer of pebbles to form a burial floor. This was laid as part of the original interment. The second interment brought about both the disarticulation of the first, and the disturbance of this pebble floor. Finally, pithos 11 contained a grey minyan kantharos that seemed to be at a higher level than the burial, so perhaps indicating some post-interment event. However, given that these items seem to be a regular part of the rituals at this site, perhaps it was present with the grave originally and later disturbed.

It is possible that there may have been an intention, expectation or allowance for the possibility of the reuse of pithoi. It has already been noted that the funerary pithoi are large, and it is perhaps significant that they are much larger than those used in Crete - suggesting therefore that they are somewhat larger than necessary for an inhumation. This might however be partly explained if their dimensions were dictated by some use to which they were put in a previous domestic context. More significant is the location of the pithos in the mound and the architecture of the mound itself. At*14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia*, for example, the second and third layers of stone seem designed for the insertion of pithoi in such a way that their mouths would face outward and in a prominent position (**A1.*14*.19-20**). A similar situation exists at *17:Voïdhokiliá*, while the one pithos described at *27:Roútsi* was equipped with a drystone construction to support its neck (**A1.*27*.4-5**), suggesting that in this case also the mouth was at least partly above the level of the mound. It is the way that the pithoi were set in these mounds that suggests that access to the interior and reuse for further interments was, if not always intended, at least provided for.

In summary, the evidence indicates first, that the burial mounds themselves were designed to allow for burial to take place in a context of previous funerary acts; and second, that there was occasional direct interference with existing graves, often related to the interment of a second individual. Although the placement of funerary pithoi high in the mound with mouths outward and prominent may have facilitated access to the grave, the partial evidence indicates that second burials are rather rare, and no pithos is noted as containing more than two individuals. It may be that access to the pithos was primarily aimed at activities other than new burial, such as facilitating a return to the grave after the dissolution of the flesh; both articulated and disarticulated burials are, however, present in the graves. The evidence is therefore inconclusive, and there is moreover a suspicion that some interference activities might date to a later period (perhaps MHIII, below).

Acts involving materials brought to the grave

As with the simpler graves, it seems that most burial ceremonies in these mounds did not result in much deposition of artefacts. There is evidence, however, for variation in practice between the different sites, especially between the two best known, *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia* and *17:Voïdhokiliá*. Table 8.4 below lists the evidence, most of which comes from *17:Voïdhokiliá*.

Site		Grave	Details
14	Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia	Cist 14	Pottery fragments forming minyan pot of open shape
14	Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia	Pithos 19	Minyan kantharos and jug
14	Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia	Pithos 23/24	Ewer
17	Voïdhokiliá	Pithos 1	kantharos and another pot (open shape)
17	Voïdhokiliá	Pithos 4	one sherd
17	Voïdhokiliá	Pithos 5	grey minyan kantharos and black burnished flask
17	Voïdhokiliá	Pithos 7	grey minyan kantharos and adriatic spherical jug
17	Voïdhokiliá	Pithos 10	grey minyan kantharos, cup and spherical pot
17	Voïdhokiliá	Pithos 11	grey minyan kantharos (possibly post-interment)
17	Voïdhokiliá	Pithos 13	grey minyan sherds
17	Voïdhokiliá	South cist	two small pots, one spherical
17	Voïdhokiliá	East cist	jug
17	Voïdhokiliá	Non-grave	double cup
27	Roútsi	Central pit	double cup and two other pots
35	Kokorákou	Non-grave	Minyan krater

Table 8.4. Artefacts deposited with the dead, other than those adorning the corpse.

One other object, not included in the table, is an obsidian arrowhead, discovered embedded in the chest of the corpse in pithos 15 of *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia*.

Although objects were not necessarily a part of the funeral rite at *17:Voïdhokiliá*, where present they seem to form a definite set: a kantharos with a second pot for holding liquids. This indicates a drinking ceremony as a regular part of the interment ceremony at the site (unless the kantharoi were regularly inserted as part of later ceremonies). These are dated to MHI, and the *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia* burials are likely to be MHII or even MHIII in date; this may clarify the difference in apparent burial customs between the sites. *17:Voïdhokiliá* however was carefully excavated in the 1970s, while most pithoi at *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia* were excavated in the 1950s, with much less information available on their content: this may also explain the apparent difference in practices.

17:Voïdhokiliá exhibits evolving tradition in burial practices in three areas: in using a communal mound, in mode of burial (pithos), and in a drinking ceremony involving Minyan kantharoi and jugs.

A double cup was found at *17:Voïdhokiliá* (**A1.*17*.14, A1.*17*.25**), and one at *27:Roútsi* Kaloyeropoúlou. At the latter site it was one of three pots placed outside the central pit near its 'entrance'; at *17:Voïdhokiliá* it was an isolated find in the mound (and probably dated MHIII). Possible functions for this unusual shape are not obvious, and the findspots suggest a ritual role. It may be that the double cup held two different liquids mixed in libations over a grave or the mound.

Deposition of material and corpse

Deposition is complex in the case of pithos burials. As was noted in chapter five, the corpse may have been inserted into the pithos before the pithos was embedded in the mound. The act of depositing the pithos would have involved at least four people lowering it into the cavity that had been prepared for it. In some cases a drystone façade was built around the mouth to support it, and the pithos might then have been partly covered by stone or earth, so that only the mouth was visible and the pithos became a part of the mound. At this point, if the body were not already within the pithos, it might be inserted, but equally the body could have been placed within the pithos at any earlier time.

Where articulated skeletons were preserved, they were always in a contracted position, with the head toward the base of the pithos, indicating that at the moment the body was placed within, it was inserted head-first. Depending on the size of the mouth, it might have been necessary to bind the legs to the torso (or wrap the body tightly in a shroud) in order to achieve insertion, and so this may partly explain the contracted position. Arranging the body within the pithos would have required reaching in with one arm, and with the taller pithoi an arm's length would not have been sufficient to arrange the body. Moreover only one person at once could have been involved in such an act. It seems very probable therefore that the corpse would have been bound or enshrouded before insertion. In some cases the bottoms of the pithoi were pierced, perhaps as an outlet for the products of the decay process.

Some of the artefacts seem carefully placed: the kantharos of *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia* pithos 19 was placed next to the face of the articulated skeleton, the jug at its knees (**A1.*14*.22**); in pithos 5 at *17:Voïdhokiliá* the flask was at the knees of the corpse, the kantharos at the pelvis; other pithoi at *17:Voïdhokiliá* were disturbed when moved during LHI. In these two cases and presumably in others, the corpse was inserted first, and then the pottery items were placed inside. In the two *17:Voïdhokiliá* cist graves (**A1.*17*.25-29**), the pottery seems equally to have been placed after the corpse was placed in the grave: in the eastern cist outside the mound, the

jug was placed behind the skull of one of the corpses; in the southern cist within the mound, the pots were placed next to the face of the corpse.

BURIAL MOUNDS OF LIKELY MH DATE (TABLE 5.2, PAGE 116)

Movement

These mounds, generally rounded structures rising to a maximum of about 4m above the surrounding landscape, possess the same general architectural properties alluded to in the previous section in connection with the excavated mounds discussed there.

Engagement with the material past

As noted above, the reuse of these mounds is in itself an engagement with the past. As these mounds are mostly unexcavated, however, there is little specific evidence to treat here. At *49:Máyeira* one of the few available details is that a kylix, possibly LHIII, was located within a pithos, possibly MH in date, suggesting that the pithos was opened and interfered with at that late date. At *8:Kissós*, the four 'grave periboloi' were clearly reused over a long period of time, and may well have been intended to be so reused. There is evidence of the disarticulation, collection and breaking of bone material in three of the four structures, while in the fourth there was no bone, although there were artefacts, suggesting that bone material might have been at some point removed.

Acts involving materials brought to the grave

A number of artefacts was recovered from the stone structures at *8:Kissós*. The only remains perhaps relating to a funeral were a cup and a ewer related with the partial remains of a skeleton in structure Γ: again, a drinking and pouring set (**A1.*8*.13-15**). Other remains seemingly relate to post-deposition practice, especially the pottery lined up against the side of stone structure Δ (**A1.*8*.16-18**).

Of the unexcavated sites identified through survey, pithos fragments and MH sherds are the most commonly noted finds. The MH sherds seem never to have been abundant, and modern surveys, as well as visits made in preparation for this thesis, rarely provide an abundance of

finds. This suggests that, as with the sites discussed in the previous section, burial practices at these mounds did not require the deposition of large amounts of material culture.

Deposition of material and corpse

Pithoi feature at the excavated sites *8:Kissós* (**A1.*8*.19-21**), *25:Dhivári* and *49:Máyeira* (**A1.*49*.1**), and are reported from *2:Evangelismós*, *6:Píla*, *15:Plátanos*, *20:Tragána Kapoureíka*, *21:Léfki*, *22:Pírgos*[5], *29:Válta*, and *33:Milióti*. Their deposition will have been subject to the considerations mentioned in the previous section.

With the possible exception of Kokorákou at *35:Peristeriá*, all sites discussed as MHI-II (table 1.7, page 33) continued to be used in this period, and *8:Kissós* was also probably in use.

Movement

The most important aspect of the architecture of tholos and chamber tombs, as far as its impact on the nature of funerary rites is concerned, is the possibility for reuse of the tomb, an aspect clearly a fundamental part of the design of the tomb. An entrance to the tomb was a design feature from the first[6], and an essential part of the design. The entrance is part of a wider series of design features that clearly mark the tholos tomb (and the following remarks apply equally to the chamber tomb) as different from previous modes of burial in one crucial respect: the tholos tomb is designed not so much for the needs of the dead body, as for the needs of the living body; the architecture of the tholos tomb specifically facilitates the presence of human individuals.

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[5] The identification of MH pottery at this site is discussed in appendix three.

[6] One or two small tholos tombs might have lacked an entrance, but on closer examination this usually seems not to have been the case. The three tholoi of *10:Gouvalári* mound 2 might have been in this category, but the excavation publication is so slight as to preclude any conclusion. Of the two tholoi apparently without entrances in *10:Gouvalári* mound A, tholos 8 seems in any case likely a post-LHI construction, and tholos 9 contains multiple burial layers of different periods: it seems more difficult to believe that repeated depositions were made through the roof than to believe simply that the entrance has not been located. Tholos 5 at *13:Kamínia* might also not have an entrance, although again this seems unlikely; the 'little circle' at *30:Nihória* and some of the Nikitopoúlou tombs at the same site might also fall into this category. Note that in no case is it certain that there was no entrance. If a tholos without entrance is suggested, one must suppose that burial took place from above, before the completion of the tholos dome. See also *10:Gouvalári*, note 2.

Other forms of burial, such as pits or cists, are very much sized and created for the corpse. They are open in form, the opening suitable for the lowering of a corpse into the pit or cist, along with a usually minimal number of objects. They can only form a closed space when the grave itself is closed, at which time entry is thus prevented. Pithoi are slightly different, in that they present a closed space with an opening, but only in the largest pithoi might it have been possible for those involved in the funeral to enter the pithos, and there is no direct evidence that they did. Instead the aperture of the pithos allowed for the introduction of the corpse into a relatively closed space.

The form of the tholos tomb similarly creates a closed space, accessed by a relatively narrow opening. In this case, however, the scale of the tomb is very much fitted to the needs of the living body. Only in the very smallest tombs, for example the 1.55m diameter tholos 3 in Mound A at *10:Gouvalári*, would it be difficult or impossible for an adult to stand up, and tholoi of these dimensions are very rare. The average diameter of the Mound A tholoi at *10:Gouvalári* is 3.18m, suggesting an average height of perhaps 2.5m: certainly above 2m. One or two adults could freely move around in most of these buildings, and several more could enter at a push.

This is a crucial observation, since from the first it appears that the interior of the tomb became a focus for activity: not merely the disposal of the dead, but the digging of graves, activities involving various items, and interference in the detritus of previous acts. Those acts were not specifically made possible by the tholos architecture: after all, they could have been conducted in an open space over a grave. Instead, the tholos enables such activities to take place within an enclosed environment. The tholos tomb creates a secret area, entry into which is normally blocked and might be controlled or regulated according to the combined and conflicting wills of those involved. This secret area, used both as a place of decomposition for the corpse and a storehouse of ancestral material, can be understood as a liminal locale: as much as it is the place where the dead are transformed from recognisable corpse to part of the ancestral mass, it is also a place where the living might go to stand on the edge of the world, at the interface between the living and the dead, to confront through the remains their beliefs about death and, if any, the afterworld.

The importance of the scaling of the tholos tomb to the living body cannot be emphasised enough. It is this scaling, along with the provision of an entrance, that marks the tholos clearly as an architectural space designed for the movement in and out of the agent, and her activity within. It is possible that in bringing the first tholos tomb into being, its designer did not fully

appreciate or intend these consequences: especially if one accept that the smallest tholoi were the first to be built, it is possible that the architect was simply thinking of a grander burial space within a mound which might be used again, without imagining ever-larger tholoi and a consequent change of burial practice. Nonetheless, such was the result of the perfection of the construction technique. The sudden appearance of so many tholoi, and then increases in scale so that by LHII the construction of 6m to 8m diameter tholoi was normal, can only be explained in terms of a change in funerary practice facilitated and brought about by these tholoi, but in traditional terms so that such changes came to be seen as natural and themselves traditional.

The tholos consists of two or three principal features: the chamber, a lowered and narrowed entranceway or entrance passage (the 'stomion'), and usually an approach way (the 'dromos') wider than the stomion and open at the top. If a group of people approach the tomb, their approach through open land is unconstrained by their surroundings. They may or may not choose to adopt a specific orientation and ordering, conditioned (during funerals) by the carrying of the corpse, and perhaps through the rôles being acted out; but on arrival at the tomb their movement is from that point constrained by its architecture. Depending on the dimensions of the chamber, stomion and dromos, and the number of people involved, it is usually difficult for a large number of people to approach and enter the tomb at once. In fact, the effect of the dromos is to create a narrow entrance way, and the stomion in most cases would have forced entry in single file. Moreover, the dimensions of the chamber, not to mention any remains on the floor, would have constrained the number of individuals that might be present within the tomb at any one time.

The effect of the dromos and stomion extends beyond the mode of entry to the tomb; it also creates a unitary line of focus for an otherwise circular monument. This is a significant development, in that it creates front and back space in a monument that might otherwise be viewed as homogeneous in its architecture. The tholos creates multiple spaces in the locale. There is the secret inner space of the chamber, there is the front space of the façade of the tomb, and there is the back space at the end of the dromos where onlookers (those not at that point entering the monument) might have stood. Another kind of back space is formed by the mound itself, now no longer the object of focus.

Tholos architecture is not merely constraining, however. The word 'constraint' is value laden, in that it implies that people are forced into acting in a manner that they might otherwise not have. However, given that tholos tombs were built and used in numbers and over a long period, it is a reasonable observation that these tombs were felt to serve well specific needs in the

funerary sphere. Therefore, constraint in the manner of approach, in the number of individuals within, can be thought of as acceptable to those using the tomb, and moreover as enabling: enabling the creation of an inner space, enabling certain acts to take place at the façade, enabling a group of people to break into sub-groups, each occupying different areas and moving around at different times. In other words, the architecture enabled the kinds of funerary performances thought of as appropriate and 'good' by those involved; the constraint that only a certain number of individuals may occupy the chamber, for example, in fact enables the conduct of certain acts in a closed off space by those few individuals.

The act of moving through or down the dromos gradually cuts one approaching off from the world, as the sides of the dromos rise around her and her focus is directed to the darkness of the chamber through the stomion. The liminal point is the stomion itself. Face the chamber in the stomion, and one's focus is on the world of the dead; face the dromos, and one's focus is drawn along and up the dromos to the outside world. The stomion is the point of contact between the two, the point where the body is most controlled: it is the narrowest point of the construction, it is often too low to stand, and in some cases one is required to crawl through. Once through, within the chamber one may once again move and turn relatively freely: within the world of the dead. The outside world is represented only by the light filtering through the stomion, which must be negotiated once again in order to leave. Therefore, the stomion is the point where the body is most constrained, and the point of transfer between the outer world and the chamber of the dead. This is therefore symbolically a point that those controlling access to the tomb would seek to control.

Having gained entry to the tomb, perhaps burdened with a corpse and with other accoutrements of the performance, the participants would be free to carry out whatever acts they intended in relation to the material in the tomb and any new burial. Their numbers would be limited by the size of the tomb and by the constraint on freedom of movement created by any remains on the floor. It is possible that others would have crowded in, and filled stomion and dromos; alternatively, those outside the chamber may have kept distance, perhaps standing at the upper end of the dromos. The architecture allows passage between regions: someone inside might leave, someone outside might enter; it is even possible that a continuous stream of people could be entering and leaving, especially at the larger tombs. Tholos architecture does not fix the possibilities of movement, but it does structure them.

Engagement with the material past

The re-use of a mound, tomb or grave cutting is a conscious act of involvement in the stuff of earlier burials and ceremonies. Moreover, the architecture of most of the sites under discussion in this section both encourages re-use and remains a prominent and permanent reminder and locale in the landscape. That the architecture allows for reuse does not show in itself that such repeated visits in fact took place; rather it is in the remains found within tombs that the evidence for multiple events in the tomb's history is to be found.

The problems of interpreting these events are acute, and have tended in the past to be side-stepped by underplaying their significance, through the underlying notion that tombs should be related to a specific initial event and that later events are secondary in every sense (chapter four). If however it is accepted that the use of the tomb beyond the initial burial was in most cases an intended consequence of their architectural form, then the importance of any first event is lessened and interpretation must involve the whole history of the tomb.

The most difficult problem is not in recognising events that have taken place but in placing them chronologically. Few contexts are recorded and reported in sufficient detail to approach this problem. Therefore, not only is the evidence in most cases a mix of earlier and later activities, but it is more difficult to pick out events clearly pertaining to the very early period under discussion here (MHIII-LHI). Few of the tombs under discussion here can be said to have gone out of use during this period; these few are at *10:Gouvalári*, perhaps the tholos in mound B, and perhaps tholos 1[7] in mound A; from *13:Kamínia*, perhaps tholos 4; the MH/LHI grave at *35:Peristeriá*, possibly tholos III at *35:Peristeriá*, the *62:Kíthira* tombs. In addition there are cases where individual contexts are identified as belonging to this period.

The following analysis of the evidence aims to examine the ways that people might have dealt with the tangible remains of previous events and lives in this period, and to test the hypothesis that, through a range of different possible reactions, the involvement of people with the detritus of previous acts in the MHIII-LHI period developed into a tradition that continued unchanged to the end of LHII and in all probability to the end of the Mycenaean palace period (LHIIIB2) and perhaps beyond.

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[7] However with 'submycenaean' interference in upper levels.

At *10:Gouvalári* the single tholos in mound B (**A1.*10*.36**) was of diameter between 3m and 4m approximately, and was almost certainly constructed in the MHIII period. The description of the content of the tomb is not detailed, but finds were grouped in three areas: in the central-eastern part of the chamber, a group of bones was noted, associated with three stone objects identified as whetstones (**A1.*10*.37** right), a pin, and three arrowheads. The bones were disarticulated and likely belonged to one individual. In the south part of the chamber there was a second collection of disarticulated bones, again likely belonging to a single individual. Sherds found belonged to an MH vessel (some sort of jug) and an LHI Vafió cup, and a neolithic (or neolithic-type) axe (**A1.*10*.37** left) was found in the same area. In the west part of the chamber was a pit containing the articulated skeleton of a woman about 35 years old at death. The pit also contained a small pot and two clay spindles.

The lack of stratigraphic evidence obviously precludes secure interpretation of these remains. The excavator suggested that the two groups of bones and artefacts were the remains of earlier burials originally placed in the pit, each disinterred and placed elsewhere at the time of a later burial. The third burial therefore represents the final act within the tomb. Other explanations are however possible. Factors to be considered include:

- The two disarticulated burials might have been interred at any time and subsequently disarticulated. There is no specific published evidence linking them with the pit;
- Disarticulation is clearly a secondary process, only carried out after the flesh has decayed. As such, artefacts found with disarticulated bones need not relate to the original context of deposition of the bones: mixing of contexts may have occurred, or they may have been deposited as part of the act of disarticulation;
- Material (including bones) may have been brought from elsewhere at any time and deposited in the tomb;
- Material may have been completely removed from the tomb at any time;
- The nature of the ceramic of the period precludes fine judgements between MHIII and LHI.

In particular, the stone artefacts found with one of the bone collections are specifically noted as lying above the bones. This seems to indicate deliberate deposition at the time of disarticulation and secondary interment, perhaps deposition on top of a thin layer of earth placed over the bones, or perhaps on top of a garment placed over the bones. These stone artefacts were therefore manipulated as part of that act; they may have been part of the original burial context, or they may have been introduced from elsewhere at this time.

The pottery found with the other collection of bones relates to a drinking and a pouring vessel. Their description as LHI and MH respectively might suggest that they first entered the tomb at different times, but the MH vessel might well have been in use at the same time as the LHI Vafió cup (chapter one, pages 26-27).

The identifiable acts within the tomb are therefore limited to the digging of the pit, the disarticulations of the two skeletons and their collection and deposition along with other artefacts, and the deposition of the intact skeleton in the pit along with a few artefacts. While the previous history of the dead represented by the disarticulated skeletons cannot be deciphered on the basis of the evidence, the fact of their disarticulation and deposition clearly shows a concern to work through certain acts using the material of the ancestors, with a concern to transform those remains from the articulated skeletons of perhaps identifiable individuals to heaps of bones of the ancestors. While all the evidence suggests that this act or these acts occurred in the LHI period, this is not a certainty; the lack of later material supports an LHI date for these acts.

Tholos 1 in mound A at *10:Gouvalári* (**A1.*10*.2**) is described in less detail: twelve separate deposits of human bones were recorded within a tholos of diameter 2.9m, of which only one was an articulated skeleton. Some were at higher levels than others in the fill, suggesting the use of earth to cover individual deposits. Recovered artefacts were not recorded in association with these collections of bones, perhaps indicating that they were found separately.

The interpretation of the contents of the tomb must be seen in the light of the constraints suggested for the previous tomb. Interesting in this example is the likelihood that various artefacts were found not in association with individual interments, indicating either the separation of these artefacts from the bones of some primary context of inhumation, or that they were brought into the tomb and deposited during acts not specifically related to the deposition of bones. Nonetheless, the main evidence from this tomb again suggests that secondary interment after disarticulation was a common and eventually traditional practice in these tombs.

Tholos 4 at *13:Kamínia* (**A1.*10*.24-25**) is 2.7m in diameter and its excavator regards it as the earliest of the mound, constructed in the MHIII period and used until its collapse in the second half of the LHI period. Excavation is incomplete, but revealed a single extended articulated skeleton central in the chamber and at a relatively high level in the fill: the skull had been removed, and there was no other associated material. The final deposit of material was judged

to be four pottery items found in the northeast part of the tomb. These consisted of drinking and pouring shapes and are the result of an act unconnected with burial (as recognised by the excavator). The area under the articulated burial is unexcavated, but excavations in the peripheral areas of the tomb revealed two bone collections and an isolated skull near the entrance, while at the back of the tomb an area extending below the foundations and initially interpreted as a pit contained six other disarticulated burials; scattered individual bones were noted throughout. Among other finds, sherds of at least five Vafió cups were collected (**A1.*13*.27**), sometimes from among certain bone piles. Near the centre there were the bones of an animal (or animals).

Details are sketchy because of the incomplete nature of the excavation: in particular there is no information on the original floor of the tomb. However, again there is an emphasis on the disarticulation of bones: of nine individuals, eight were disarticulated, the ninth decapitated (presumably post-*mortem* and post-decomposition). The final deposit of pottery in the tomb is not related to any burial, and hints at non-interment acts within the tomb. The presence of Vafió cups, for example, might be associated with drinking or toasting ceremonies. A pit was dug around the walls at the back of the tholos and most of the bone material was deposited within it at some point. The finds of scattered individual bones also tends to reinforce the idea that the disarticulated bones were seen to lose their individuality and become part of the ancestral mass. Finally the presence of animal bones suggests sacrifice; this is unusual in such an early context, however, and perhaps complete excavation will provide another explanation.

After such examples, the finds of the MH/LH grave at *35:Peristeriá* seem less unusual. This consists of a large, shallow, stone-lined pit about 2.5m x 2.5m (**A1.*35*.10-16**) that was found to contain a number of discrete deposits of human bone and other material, as well as many individual bones and artefacts over its floor; there was no intact inhumation[8], and little evidence that there might ever have been one. The exact form of this grave is unclear, perhaps damaged by the creation of the nearby massive peribolos for tholos I in LHIIA: it is therefore difficult to judge *how* people might have used or moved in the tomb. The remains, however, can only be interpreted as the result of acts where people engaged with earlier burials and reordered them, perhaps even bringing them from another tomb to this tomb.

The distribution and condition of 'precious' items is of particular importance in this tomb. It is clear in this instance that during these acts of secondary interference and redeposition people

[8] Save one *above* the covering slabs (**A1.*35*.13**), associated by the excavator with events surrounding the LHIIA construction of the nearby peribolos for tholos I.

were not particularly concerned to remove 'precious' material from the tomb for use elsewhere; in fact there are some peculiar instances of engagement with these items that resulted in forms of deposition that sought to impose a limit to the possible meanings of the objects. So for example, within a clay kantharos set upright on the floor were four gold bands and a gold vessel like a kantharos (**A1.*35*.20-21**). The gold vessel and the gold bands had been deformed in order to fit them within the clay kantharos. These are presumably to be associated with the group of bones lying nearby. The five gold items had been selected and carefully made to fit in the kantharos, perhaps transported thus from their original context of deposition, then set upright with the bones and some other artefacts. The deformation of the items, particularly the gold vessel, is an indication that the vessel, perhaps used for drinking during the original burial, was no longer to be used in that way; its property of being able to contain things was no longer required, and its meaning was primarily derived from its context in the grave, perhaps in particular with the nearby bones.

There are similar instances within this tomb. With the earliest burial (including the remains of at least two individuals; **A1.*35*.17**) was found a sword that had been burned and bent, its handle and tip missing (**A1.*35*.19**); it is of course impossible to tell whether this action on the sword was carried out at the initial interment or at the time of disarticulation and redeposition (Åström 1987 lists similar contexts for Cyprus and other parts of the Eastern Mediterranean). The interpretation of the action is however the same as that with the gold items above. The meaning to be inferred from the sword no longer resulted from its being a sword, but rather comes from its context as an item deposited with a burial and now part of the grave. As such, the burning, bending and breaking (assuming that the loss of tip and handle are not due to post-depositional factors) transform the sword's physical appearance and mark it out as a sword that belongs in the grave. Also with this group of artefacts was a clay goblet, in the middle area of the burial, set upright (at 70° or 75° to the floor) and containing eight gold foil circles with papyrus-shaped pendants and a linear tube (**A1.*35*.18**). The gold foil items almost certainly were originally part of the raiment of a corpse, and their context indicates that when reordering and redeposition of the bones took place they were either removed from the garment or had already fallen off in the processes of decay. Their meaning, however, remained bound up with the funerary context and so they were gathered and redeposited with the bones.

The conclusion that I reach from these instances is that, however 'precious' gold items may have been at the time, once deposited in the grave their significance was as artefacts used in the ritual of interment. Later, when people came into contact with them on entering the tomb again, they were not removed but stayed in their contexts. As bones were reordered or perhaps deposited

elsewhere, these items could also be moved, and at such times might be gathered and even deformed, the last practice emphasising the changed nature of the items: not a sword, or a gold vessel, but artefacts belonging in the tomb.

Another tomb with 'precious' artefacts is tholos III at *35:Peristeriá*. These were found without associated bones in the pit running from the entrance to the centre of the chamber (**A1.*35*.43-50**). The nature of the material, mostly gold leaf, but including many gold artefacts likely originally sewn onto clothing, and some other artefacts, makes it likely to have resulted from a gathering together of the material specifically for deposition in the pit. Three large gold cups were found deformed, although in this case it is perhaps more likely that the agency of deformation was the act of burial or the collapse of the tholos above.

In conclusion, therefore, an examination of intact MHIII-LHI contexts confirms the following:

- tombs were reused from the earliest period;
- in some or many instances of reuse, people came into contact with the detritus of earlier acts. In some cases this was the aim of the reuse: people entered the tombs with the intention of manipulating the artefactual and anthropological material within. In other cases, perhaps for new inhumations, contact with material in the tomb was not the main aim of entry, but nonetheless strategies developed for coping with such situations;
- from the earliest stage intact skeletons were disarticulated and burial contexts were interfered with. In part this interference seems aimed at the creation of a new context where disarticulated bones and artefacts associated with the burial could be piled up or buried. At other times this interference leads to the disintegration of the original context, material being spread widely over the tomb. In all cases the result is the loss of the identifiable pristine inhumation on the floor.
- in the instances examined artefacts, rather than being removed from the tomb, are also redeposited. This applies to 'precious' as well as other items. It is suggested that the meaning inferred from such artefacts was tightly bound to the funerary context, so that rather than interpret an article as, say, 'a gold cup', it is rather interpreted as 'the gold cup used to drink the final toast in the burial ceremony'. Thus linked to the burial, it is unlikely to be removed from that context.

It is of course very likely that artefacts *were* removed from tombs from time to time: there must have been occasions where those entering a tomb felt (for whatever reason) that an object should be moved out of the tomb. The point, however, is that those using these tombs did not

merely interpret precious items as something to be owned, as the western mind immediately assumes. The removal of such artefacts would be sanctioned by the uses to which the might legitimately be put: for example, an artefact might be removed to be used in such a way as to constantly make reference to its original funerary role, and thus become symbolic of an ancestor or of the ancestors. Just as the meaning of an artefact must be transformed in its use and deposition in a mortuary context, so its removal therefrom entails a further transformation in meaning - transformations brought about through action.

Having established these general principles concerning the reuse of tombs and the ways in which people reacted to the material they discovered within through analysis of the few intact MHIII-LHI contexts available, interpretation of contexts where chronological control is inexact becomes less problematic. This study suggests that where disarticulation and redeposition have occurred but cannot be dated, there is no reason to suggest that these instances *must* relate to post-LHI activities, although of course they *may* relate to post-LHI activities. As will be shown in the following section, there is no significant change in funerary customs in this regard in LHII.

Thus in the chamber tombs of *23:Volimídhia*, for example, some or all of the many pits in the floor and the floor level wall niches may well date to the LHI period. At this particular site the funerary customs seem to have been as standardised as the architecture: an inhumation, placed on the floor (for example, **A1.*23*.40**), was later according to custom disarticulated and placed in a niche or pit, or piled in an area of the floor (for example, **A1.*23*.26**), along with the few artefacts that might also have been deposited. The suggestion here is that there might have been a specific time of second entry and disarticulation (as in modern Greek practice), maintained as a local custom by the users of these tombs in the same way that they maintained the architectural knowledge necessary to construct tombs in their (relatively) unique way.

Acts involving materials brought to the grave

Excepting material likely to be associated with the dress and arrangement of the corpse or the mourners (chapter seven), the general categories of other finds are few: principally pottery vessels in drinking and pouring shapes, and flint, obsidian or bronze arrowheads. Examples of the arrowheads are found in almost every tomb, and are found in contexts securely of MHIII-LHI date. Sometimes they are found gathered together, indicating either deposition in a bag or in a quiver, attached to hafts long since decayed. In some cases these may belong to the arrangement of the corpse, and with the other weaponry symbolise social ideals expressed in the ritual of hunting. In most cases, however, they are found scattered: Marinátos (1957c, 100;

Korrés 1976a, 262 note 1) suggested that a volley of arrows might be shot in honour of the corpse, but the size of the tombs, the locations of the arrowheads, and their lack of impact damage from the tomb walls all make this an unlikely to have been standard practice, although it may have happened on occasion.

Much of the MHIII-LHI pottery under discussion here is illustrated and described by Lólos (1985: description, chapter II and throughout; illustrations, volume II figures 180-627). It consists of drinking shapes (most commonly the Vafió or 'Keftiu' cup, and also shallow cups), pouring shapes such as ewers, and large open shapes such as kraters. The cups are mostly fine decorated, but much of the other pottery is rather plain; a few examples (such as a LHI pithoid jar from *35:Peristeriá* tholos III) are precursors of the large painted vessels of the succeeding period. There is also a number of small pouring vessels, such as askoi, which have already been associated with preparation of the corpse (chapter seven).

Reconstructing the uses to which these vessels were put in the funerary context is not easy. The cups seem clearly for drinking: they might be found in any context, in the stomion (see below), on the chamber floor, or in pits and niches; they are common in settlement sites, and should not be regarded as special. Three large gold vessels from *35:Peristeriá* tholos III are cups (**A1.*35*.44-46**). It seems likely that a substance such as wine was brought into the tomb and then poured from a jug into cups held by participants. At other times, at the closing of the tomb or at particular times when the tomb was closed, a similar ceremony was repeated in the dromos, this time smashing the cups against the blocked entrance.

The evidence for animal (or human) sacrifice at early Mycenaean funerals is weak. If animals were sacrificed, their bones were not commonly brought into the tomb. However, some of the material found in tombs may relate to this activity. Larger open vessels, for example, although they might be interpreted as intended to hold wine, might equally have been used to catch and hold the blood of a sacrificed animal (as shown on the much later sarcophagus from Ayia Triádha in Crete). In the same vein, it is possible that some of the knives found in tombs, rather than simply forming part of the corpse' garb, might have been used to cut sacrificial animal's throats. Perhaps the hunting symbolism on a number of the highly decorated inlaid knives found at Mycenae and *27:Roútsi* (perhaps LHIIA) can be directly related to the act of funerary sacrifice. 'Neolithic' stone axe heads found in a number of tombs might also have been used to administer the stunning blow prior to cutting the throat. The lack of animal bones in most tombs might be explained by the carrying out of the feast resulting from the sacrifice elsewhere; in any

case animal bones are not unknown, and at Mycenae are found in the upper shafts of the contemporary shaft graves.

Much pottery found in Mycenaean tombs is smashed. This breakage may have occurred at the time of deposition, or may have occurred as a result of later interference. In either case, the meaning of the act of smashing a cup or jug is clear: it signifies the end of the act with which that item was associated, and in a larger sense signifies the end of that phase of the ritual and most likely the end of the life of the deceased. Broken pottery does not indicate disrespect for the ancestors, as is often stated; rather it is part of a profoundly respectful sentiment, that the items used in a particular ceremony, and therefore bound up so much in the act of grieving for one who has died, should not be used again in another context. Where pottery is not smashed, placing it in a niche or burying it in a pit fulfils much the same function.

One unusual grave is the main grave at Kefalóvriso 1 at *23:Volimídhia*. Very little or none of the large number of artefacts found in the grave can be related to the adornment of the corpse - a very unusual circumstance among graves containing artefacts. The grave is fully described in the catalogue entry. The grave contained six double cups (**A1.*23*.4**) along with other unusual items, such as a bowl containing four small cups attached to the wall of the pot (**A1.*23*.5**); the other pottery included jugs, bowls and cups. The grave evidences an emphasis on the rituals of burial which presumably involved this pottery collection, but very little emphasis on the corpse itself. There is no comparable burial in the survey area at any time; the funerary ritual involves artefacts known from elsewhere, and so is not unconnected with other sites in the area. There is a kantharos, for example, used at nearby tumulus sites (*14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia* and *17:Voïdhokiliá*), and the double cup is known from *27:Roútsi*, *17:Voïdhokiliá* and *3:Nisakoúli*. This grave (well dated to MHIII) further emphasises that middle helladic burial customs could draw on a variety of widely understood traditions, but those traditions might be differently emphasised and deployed at neighbouring sites (and there is a possibility that this grave once formed part of a mound, further linking it with those mentioned above).

Deposition of material and corpse

For the primary interment of the corpse, few intact examples offer details and so one must infer from the architecture and the artefacts the possible procedures of interment. It would seem that in most cases in tholos and chamber tombs the corpse was laid on the floor of the tomb; there are a few examples of pit burials belonging to this period (for example, the burial in a pit of a woman in the small tholos in *10:Gouvalári* mound B), but none of burials on benches, in the

dromos or stomion, or direct evidence for burial in wooden coffins. Larnax burial is unknown, including the *62:Kithira* tombs, but there are some continuing examples of jar burial, principally in pithoi, although in all cases these seem smaller than the enormous pithoi known from monuments discussed in chapter seven.

The evidence for deposition of material as part of the original funeral in this period is almost non-existent, on account of the lack of pristine contexts and poor recording and reporting. Circumstantial evidence indicates that objects might be placed close to the corpse, or might be smashed on the floor. The deposition of material as part of the secondary treatment of burial groups is discussed above.

The LHI-IIA, LHIIA and LHIIB periods (tables 1.12-1.15, page 34-35)

Movement

The larger tholos tombs to some extent undermine the analysis of the scale of tholos architecture in relation to their human users given above. The suggestion that tholos and chamber tombs were specifically designed with the active adult human frame in mind becomes less tenable in considering tholoi (and the large chamber tomb at *52:Pellána*) of 8m, 10m or even 12m chamber diameter (and other dimensions consequently enlarged); in reality a tomb of 12m diameter (in the study area, only *35:Peristeriá* I and *44:Kakóvatos* A are of this size) dwarfs even an 8m tomb. There is some other logic at work in the design of these tombs: they are not scaled in accordance with the human frame, they overwhelm it.

Taking the examples of the two largest tombs, *35:Peristeriá* I has a chamber of 12.03m diameter and restored height of 8.5m, which is probably lower than the antique reality. The façade was formed by a 5.1m high stomion with sawn blocks and other possible decorative features ('mason's marks') which fronted a 5m deep entranceway; the dromos was 28m long, going into a massive mound retained by a proportionately scaled peribolos wall. The tomb must surely have formed the largest single feature on the upper hillside, and its importance was perhaps marked by the demolition of the east house in order to accommodate it.

44:Kakóvatos A has a chamber 12.12m in diameter, original height unknown, presumably about 10m; it was approached through a stomion slightly shorter than that at *35:Peristeriá* I (4.85m deep); the original height of the stomion is unknown. The dromos, 8m in length, is

hardly comparable to that at *35:Peristeriá*, although the reason is clear: the Peristeriá tholos was set in an artificial mound, while the *44:Kakóvatos* tholos had to conform to the requirements of the slope into which it was built.

With these two tombs the conclusion must be that the architecture was designed to undermine the 'presence' that any one person might have sought to put forth in its setting; that rather than the monument suiting the size of several individuals, the individuals would be lost in the size of it; and that, in theory if not in practice, a very large number of people might be active in the chamber[9], entrance and approach whenever the monument was open. In part the size may have been designed to allow for larger numbers of people to approach the entrance when that was closed, and be involved in ceremonies related to the dead within. Ultimately, the high façades and vast chambers must have been designed to impress one who enters.

One can therefore assume that the relatively small scale funerary ceremonies likely to have taken place in most tholos tombs and chamber tombs were sometimes writ large in the largest tombs. This means that the number of people who seem to have an interest in the tomb or activities there is larger: this may be related to the locations of these tombs, often away from the original core area in central Messinía. That the desire to build ever-larger tholos tombs is evidenced away from this core is an indication that the adoption of the tholos form elsewhere did not necessarily entail the adoption of all of the ideas associated with its use. At some locations, therefore, the meaning of the tholos tomb was articulated through its use by a relatively large number of people, whereas elsewhere larger numbers of smaller tombs were available to different communities or groups within society, using them in an already traditional way.

Engagement with the material past

There is no significant change in evidence for how people approached the detritus of the past in this period. Tombs A & B at *44:Kakóvatos* seem to represent relatively closed LHIIA contexts (later interference was only noted higher in the fill). Despite the early date of excavation, Dörpfeld was careful about observing and recording the stratigraphy. Hence in both tombs a layer of 'sand' about 15cm thick covered the floor levels of the tombs, and all of the finds were found in this layer. These finds, much more numerous in tomb A, were scattered and

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[9] Allowing a generous 1m² floor space per person, the numbers of people filling chambers of diameter 3m, 6m, 9m, and 12m are, respectively, 7, 28, 64 and 113 (read off from table 6.3). These figures are simply meant to illustrate how different sizes of tomb relate to the human form, not to suggest that ceremonies might normally involve such these numbers.

destroyed. The most likely explanation is that the tombs collapsed relatively soon after construction, and were not later interfered with.

It is difficult on the basis of the evidence that we have to determine to what extent the scattered and damaged nature of the content of the tomb derives from its collapse and to what extent from the activities of people. Finds were described as being relatively evenly scattered over the floor. The most obvious interpretation, given this even scatter and the sheer amount of material involved, is that the tomb was used on a number of occasions, each burial contributing to the eventual content of the tomb. However, one significant piece of evidence is that anthropological material was rare, and it is possible that the total material found represented only a single adult (other bone material was animal, perhaps representing sacrifice). It is therefore possible that the entire content of the tomb was the result of a single act, a burial involving a huge amount of material and a sacrifice. The lack of later interference in the tomb could be explained by its rapid collapse. If the latter explanation is correct, then the unusual scale of the ceremony corresponds with the large scale of the tomb itself, representing perhaps the 'over adoption' of funerary practices derived from the south.

Tholos V at *24:Englianós* is published in some detail and it therefore seems reasonable to attempt to reconstruct some at least of the history of use of the tomb. Its early date is assured by a number of deposits: in particular, three jar burials are of MHIII-LHI date. However, the internal arrangement of the tomb clearly dates to a later period. The latest pottery is of LHIIIA date, but a number of contexts may have reached their final state before then.

To take pit 3 as an example, it is described as irregularly shaped and seems to have been about 2.7m x 2.4m x 0.5m, on the basis of published illustrations (**A1.*24*.19, A1.*24*.21**). Part of the pit, an area about 1.5m x 1.1m, was at least another 0.5m deeper (bottom left of **A1.*24*.20**). The larger pit was possibly not intended to be filled with earth to the level of the floor, since the material found in it seems clearly to have been arranged, perhaps for display. Briefly, the pit contained a Minoan or Minoan style jar on its side in the northwest corner, a palace style jar set upright in the north central part, a group or two groups of bones on the west, and in the deeper pit a pithos with various bronze artefacts. The pithos, spouted jar and palace style jar each contained a burial.

The palace style jar can be clearly dated LHIIA, while the pithos and Minoan jar are LHI items. Other artefacts found in the pit include a cup within the spouted jar also dated LHI, and a shallow cup near the palace style jar. Beside and underneath the Minoan jar were three 'rapiers'

(all blades bent, two to 90°), a knife and a dagger (**A1.*24*.33**); in the deeper part of the pit were a bronze cauldron beside the pithos, and underneath it a knife, whetstone, and three daggers (**A1.*24*.26**). Between the pithos and the cauldron were four 'rapiers'; nearby were ivory pommels, boars' tusks and ivory, obsidian and amber fragments. The rapiers were all of Type A, hence early Mycenaean.

The pit and the arrangement of its contents might have been created in LHI or in LHIIA. If created in LHI, then the palace style jar and its burial was a later addition. However, the rather careful arrangement of the pit suggests that it was planned as a unity. At some point in the LHII period the remains of numerous burials were gathered and reinterred in pit 3. The bones of up to ten individuals (**A1.*24*.29**) were placed in the west side of the pit, while two of the jar burials were carefully positioned at the north end. The deeper part of the pit may have already existed, or was created to accommodate the upright pithos. The objects found near the Minoan jar were placed on the ground before the jar was laid on its side; the objects in the deeper section were similarly carefully laid. Small objects such as beads seem not to have been reinterred in this pit, and most of the pottery that might have gone with these burials is similarly missing. On the other hand, the cup found within the Minoan jar might have been placed within it at this point.

Nothing in pit 3 can be dated later than LHIIA: therefore the pit attained its final form by the end of that period, and was not interfered with again.

Pit 4 (**A1.*24*.34**), near the north part of the tomb, contained the mixed remains of five individuals. The finds suggest a specific act of interment: at the bottom of the pit was a knife, above which were the bones, and above these again were five further knives, a whetstone, and a gold diadem, broken and placed at different ends of the pit. Selection has clearly taken place as to what items to inter in the pit, and care has been taken first to mix the bones of the individuals and then to mix the artefacts above them, even breaking and scattering the diadem. These artefacts do not represent all the artefacts that we might presume had originally been interred with these individuals. The content of this pit and the date of its formation might be LHI or LHII.

Very little pottery of the LHIII phase is definitely present in the tomb, and it seems likely that the tomb went out of use at the LHII-III transition. At some point, above pit 4, a group of pottery, mainly alabastra, was deposited. Some of these are LHI in date, most LHIIA, and one definite LHIIIA1 item was present. This would seem to represent one of the last acts in the

tomb, a gathering and deposition of items from a number of different funerals in this area, probably without knowledgeable reference to the pit below (the items are by no means centred over the pit).

The Vayenás tholos therefore represents one of the most instructive examples of how the remains of earlier acts were dealt with in later periods. The tomb dates from the MHIII-LHI period, but the arrangements of its contents is most probably the result of a number of interventions in the LHIIA-IIIA1 periods. In this case people were concerned to gather the remains of burials and deposit them in various pits so that none remained on the floor; only the burials in jars were not removed from their contexts, although the jars themselves were. Only two interments can be specifically dated to the LHII phase: that in the palace style jar, of LHIIA date[10], and that in pit 2, of LHIIB or LHIIIA1 date. But the number of artefacts found on the floor dating to LHII shows that the tomb continued to be visited and used in this period.

The small tholos tombs of *13:Kamínia* and *10:Gouvalári* continued to be used in the LHII period, and indeed one or two may even have been built at that time. Their ongoing use, and the similarity of burial customs with the larger monuments, shows that they continued to be understood as monuments within the tholos and chamber tomb 'idea' at this time. Tomb 5 (**A1.*13*.30-33**) in the Kamínia mound, for example, was built at the beginning of LHI, but in LHIIA its contents were radically rearranged: three skulls were found against the chamber wall, while a single articulated skeleton, missing the skull, was laid out in the centre of the tomb, and one collection of bones, along with a couple of other displaced single bones, were found on the floor. The skulls were at a slightly higher level than the articulated skeleton, suggesting that this arrangement was one of the final acts in the tomb. Aside from bones, pottery items were few: one small cup was placed with the interment of the articulated skeleton, but other items, mainly cups, were found on the floor unassociated with any skeletal material. The final arrangement of the tomb was *not* associated with an act of interment; it may be that some of the pottery found on the floor was used for toasting as part of a ritual that involved re-ordering the material within the tomb.

Acts involving materials brought to the grave

The meaning of the glittering array of material culture found in the *54:Vafió* cist may have been mainly invested in its deposition (below, pages 252-253); however, the items themselves

[10] The jar was repaired with lead rivets, so it may have in fact been deposited a little later.

consist of a number of drinking (**A1.*54*.8-13**) and pouring items, along with many other objects of less obvious application, such as numerous lead and bronze disks (perhaps weights: Kilian-Dirlmeier 1987), different small bronze and silver tools, and many weapons of all types (**A1.*54*.13-14**). This unusually large amount of material may be accounted for if one imagines a number of different people responsible for, or involved in giving up material for the grave context. This might have been organised through different corporate groups involved in the funeral: for example, representatives of different communities, or different groups within society; in other words, the suggestion is that this funeral had a very wide reach in terms of numbers of people involved.

In pit 1 in chamber tomb E8 at *24:Englianós* (chapter seven; **A1.*24*.39**), apart from the alabastron there were two other pottery items: one a squat jug, the other a goblet. The obvious interpretation is that the former held a liquid that could be poured into the latter for a simple toast. All three pots were placed at the feet of the corpse after use. Despite the great difference in the quantity and perceived value of the artefacts placed in this pit and in the *54:Vafió* cist, recognisable acts carried out using the material are the same.

The pottery deposited with LHII burials in general comprises cups, pouring vessels, palace style jars, and smaller items such as alabastra. All of these are often finely decorated (although the tendency in excavation reports is to describe and illustrate decorated but not undecorated material). The alabastra are to be linked with the preparation of the corpse; the cups and smaller vessels with pouring and drinking ceremonies; and the question of the palace style jars has been discussed (chapter seven). Silver, gold and bronze versions of these pottery items are also found in a number of tombs, and presumably fulfilled the same functions in the funerary ceremony.

Deposition of material and corpse

The positions of many of the artefacts in the *54:Vafió* cist were carefully recorded, and most of them seem to have been placed in relation to the corpse. At each hand, near the piles of sealstones that likely formed bracelets, were two cups: one gold at each hand, and one silver. The gold cups are the well known Vafió cups (Davis 1977; **A1.*54*.8-9**), with *repoussé* scenes depicting the capture of bulls; the silver cups are also Vafió cups (**A1.*54*.10-11**). A silver ewer was placed at the left hand, and a shallow silver cup with gold rim was found in the same general area (**A1.*54*.12**). There were many other items in the cist, some of which may have been deposited before the corpse: Tsoúndas refers to some items forming a pillow for the

corpse[11], but perhaps these should be assumed to have been placed in the area of the head. These included four pottery items, two of which are goblets, the others not described. Terracotta and stone lamps may well have been used as the light source for the interment. Other items seem to have been found near the hands (including two silver tools described as a ladle and an earpick) and at the feet (a knife, two axes and four lead discs). The positions of some of this material are shown in Kilian-Dirlmeier's figure 2 (1987).

The amount of material (and perhaps the value of it) deposited in the *54:Vafió* cist was clearly unusual, and the burial traditions can be linked with similar earlier contexts (such as *24:Englianós* or *35:Peristeriá* above) and the Mycenae shaft graves. This uniquely undisturbed context is particularly instructive in terms of deposition. This thesis has argued for a pre-interment phase at many of these burials, where the corpse is prepared in some way, including in most cases covering or wrapping in a shroud, and sometimes adornment with jewellery or weapons attached to clothing. In the case of the *54:Vafió* cist, the deposition phase seems to have been an elaboration of the tradition of preparing the corpse for display. Without detracting from the potential uses of objects in pre-deposition ritual (mentioned above), the careful positioning of artefacts, as well as clear selection in what to deposit (evidenced by the balanced setting of gold and silver Vafió cups at left and right hand), suggests that the deposition phase of the funeral was a culmination of display in respect of the corpse: the intention was to create an image representative of the whole funeral. The numbers of certain artefacts, such as knives (at least nine examples) or discs of lead or bronze (at least 21 examples) suggest that these items were perhaps individually given to the corpse, arranged in the grave by the mourners as they filed past (many other bronze tools and small gold and silver items have not been mentioned). The scale of the *54:Vafió* tomb would allow for many people to take part in the funeral: one can even imagine that after interment, the cist and tomb might have been left open for some time to allow people to view the grave *ensemble* in all its splendour before closure.

The evidence from *54:Vafió* is balanced by that from *27:Roútsi* tholos 2, where the burial on the floor had ten swords and daggers arranged on its right side, among other material (**A1*27*.19**). Two examples are too few to base conclusions on, but it may be that in this period for some burials, more emphasis was placed on the final arrangement of the corpse within the tomb than at the laying out ceremony. Quantities of weaponry might be complemented by

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[11] It is not clear which items he is referring to: 'all these' - 'ταῦτα πάντα' could refer to the sherds of a broken lamp, or any number of other items referred to in the previous sentence: two bits of bronze, a sword, three gold rivets, six bronze knives, a bronze tube, a bronze ladle, knives or tools, two points of bronze spears, a bronze disc probably a mirror, ten bronze discs, five lead disks, two stone items, two alabastra, a silver ladle, two bits of a small silver vessel, four pots and three bits of a terracotta lamp.

other material, some of it relevant to activities in the chamber, but others not obviously so (for example bronze mirrors, present in both the burials mentioned here). The number of weapons with these burials is noteworthy, although the evidence from other sites does not bear out a general trend to place large numbers of weapons in the graves. These graves however resemble the last of the shaft graves in more ways than this, and perhaps also the so-called 'warrior graves' on Crete (Rehak & Younger 1998, 152-153 and references in note 425; Driessen & Macdonald note that few of the Knosós warrior graves actually date to LMII, most being LMIII: 1984, 65).

Another example comes from a well-preserved burial context in tholos 2 at *12:Fitiés*: material arranged around an extended interment on the floor of the tholos included a palace style jar, at the feet a kylix, alabastron and silver spoon, another alabastron and kylix to the right, to the left a bronze mirror, at the left hand two ivory-handled bronze knives (**A1.*12*.14**) and a pin, and two scale pans, one at the head and one near the feet. While this example does not approach the preceding two in terms of quantity of material, it again seems to exhibit a concern for the arrangement of the corpse and its materials within the tomb. In the same vein, the rearrangement of material and burials in the Vayená (*24:Englianós*) tholos tomb, described above, is one of the best examples of the deliberate arrangement of the contents of a tomb for display.

The bulk of the evidence, however, indicates broad continuity in deposition practices. An example is tholos 5 at *13:Kamínia*, described above: the articulated (but headless) skeleton laid out in the centre of the tomb was associated with a single cup placed at its left thigh. A similar example is provided by *24:Englianós* chamber tomb E8, described above.

It seems likely that in this period most burials continued to take place on the floors of tombs, but there are some examples of burial in pits. There are no examples of intact burials in any other context: pithos burials are not found from this period. Most skeletons seem to have been laid on their backs, a factor that tends to enlarge the area used by the corpse and its accompanying material. Where evidence is available, it is usually the case that the corpse is laid first, followed by any other material, indicating perhaps that the corpse was laid down as a first act on entering the tomb with the corpse, and then any other acts might have been carried out, as has been suggested for most periods. An example is the burial in *12:Fitiés* described above.

Chapter Nine

Summary and conclusions: mortuary practice in a historical framework

Human action in the mortuary sphere

This concluding chapter begins with a recapitulation of the evidence for human action in the mortuary sphere presented in chapters five to eight. Detailed study of the available evidence has shown that a wealth of evidence concerning human practice is available. The task in this final chapter is to make sense of these practices and to set them in a historical framework.

'Simpler' graves

Despite the disparate nature of the evidence and problems of chronology notwithstanding, real insight into burial practices has been gained. Many potential stages of the funerary process outlined in chapter four are evidenced in these graves, indicating complex practices belied by the 'simple' nature of the graves.

It was suggested that 'intramural' graves were in fact often located in disused parts of settlement, and in terms of construction this allowed for the graves to be built out of the detritus of previous settlement, or into vestigial features of that settlement, such as walls or floors. Where the cemetery locale contained numerous unmarked graves, new burials might often encounter remains of previous burials, an event dealt with by the reburial of the older bones. The cemetery locale was not viewed as a collection of individual graves but rather as an ancestral area of the site, containing traces of past lives both in the form of human remains and in the form of uninhabited or collapsed buildings.

Almost all graves were constructed with the inhumation of a single individual in mind, in that their size is matched to the human frame; even more elaborate graves (like the shaft graves at *53:Menelaion* and *57:Ayos Stéfanos*) were found to contain only one dead. In the few instances of multiple interments, there is rarely reason to suspect that the grave was constructed with the interment of more than one person in mind. Some grave cuttings were outlined at ground level with a line of stone, perhaps used to retain a low mound over the grave; cover slabs might also have been visible after the end of the funeral; these two factors suggest the possibility of a desire in some graves to leave a visible marker after the ceremony - a representation of the individual in opposition to his or her subsumption in the mass of the ancestors noted above.

The evidence for preparatory acts on the corpse is often ambiguous, but in general it seems that the corpse was often prepared by dressing or wrapping in a shroud. Evidence for contracted burial, by no means universal, might on occasion suggest binding of the legs, although in fact where contracted burials are noted they tend not to be strongly contracted. The effects of *rigor mortis* (peaking around 12 hours after death, and lasting up to 36 hours) would demand that this particular form of preparation take place very shortly after death. Other adornments on the corpse, although rare, indicate that objects taken from everyday life (rather than special objects) could be used in dressing the corpse.

The evidence for practices at the funeral itself shows that the dead was always laid with care in the grave; the funeral involved a small number of people clustered around the grave, others having to stand further back and consequently less involved; the corpse was usually primary in the deposition sequence: the other objects occasionally found in graves are found placed in relation to the corpse; where objects are found in the grave, they can almost always be associated with drinking or pouring ceremonies.

Burial mounds

Although the majority of burial mounds are unexcavated, the evidence suggests that all or almost all of them were constructed in the MH period, although their use may continue into the LH period. No burial mound can *certainly* be shown to have been constructed later than MHIII.

Although the known distribution of mounds may well be affected by sample bias, there is a clear preference for prominent location: the majority are positioned on hill tops or ridge tops. Moreover analysis of location suggested that the majority were placed at marginal points in the landscape, at the interface between coast and inland plateau, or between valley and mountain.

Location was not contingent on any one determinant, and different factors such as visibility, marginal location, and location on routes through the landscape or on the everyday paths of life, could have been employed in the location of mounds. Moreover, some mounds at least were situated amid the detritus of earlier settlement.

In its architecture, a burial mound is independent of any single grave or burial, but rather forms a matrix within which numerous burials may be placed. Each new interment in such a monument would add to its history and meaning, and this was often signified by using burial forms that constituted more or less permanent architectural additions to the monument: pithos burials, often set so that they partly projected from the mound, perhaps with drystone constructions built up around their mouths; or cist burials, with cover slabs perhaps left visible after the funeral. Nonetheless, aside from the mound itself, burial architecture remained essentially simple, individual graves usually associated with a single dead. Where multiple burials are found, they may date to a late phase of use of the mound.

Pithos burials, found in most excavated mounds and evidenced through sherd material at many unexcavated mounds, are an elaboration of ritual involving considerable effort and 'worth'. Pithoi were made by specialists and required long investment of time for their creation, and so were unlikely to be regarded as throwaway items. They were probably taken from a domestic context to be used in the funeral, so their use involved a transformation of meaning from the domestic to the funerary sphere: a transformation signified in their transportation from settlement to cemetery context, exactly as the corpse and probably done at the same time in the form of a funeral procession.

Little evidence for the preparation of the corpse is found in excavated burial mounds. The positioning of the corpse within the pithos may well have been seen as the principal act of preparation for the funeral.

Rites at the funeral itself indicate again that drinking and pouring activities form the only recognisable act beyond the inhumation of the corpse. As with 'simpler' graves, these activities are likely to have taken place after the deposition of corpse (and pithos, where relevant), artefacts being carefully placed in relation to the corpse. Where recovered in excavations, artefacts seem to form a recognisable drinking and pouring set involving kantharoi and jugs.

The use of large pithoi, and their placement in the mound such that their mouths projected above the surface, allow for the possibility that it was intended that post-interment activities

might take place. Some pithos burials, but certainly not all, were disarticulated, and some pithoi contained second interments. In the case of *14:Ayos Ioánnis Papoúlia*, some of the collected bones in cists may have been removed from pithoi when those pithoi were reused for later interments.

Tholos and chamber tombs

The first tholos tombs are located in central Messinía and their distribution closely mirrors that of burial mounds: smaller tholos tombs were set within multiple burial mounds, while larger tombs were normally set in their own mound, although some exceptions were built underground. Tombs were located within local and regional nexus of funerary monuments, and few early tombs seem to have been isolated in the landscape. There is broad continuity and development of burial customs in this area, of which the first use of tholos tombs forms one part.

It has been suggested that many of the numerous small tholos tombs belong to the very first phase of tholos construction, but also that the ability to build tombs up to about 6m diameter was very quickly achieved. During most of the LHI period tholos tombs of this size were constructed, but at the end of that period and into LHIIA a number of larger (8m to 12m diameter) tholos tombs was constructed. This burst of larger tomb construction broadly coincides with the appearance of the tholos form outside the distribution area of MH tumuli.

Tholos tombs were first constructed as burial places within multiple burial monuments. They are formally similar to large burial pithoi and the motivation for their construction may have been to facilitate reuse. Very quickly, however, the form underwent a secondary adaptation, through which tholoi came to be seen as larger-scale constructions to be built within their own mounds; in fact, the importance of the mound was reduced, and the architectural focus of the monument was redirected to the entrance of the tomb, which was elaborated by the formation of the dromos.

The construction of tholoi as small tombs in larger monuments all but precludes their introduction to Messinía from Crete as an adaptation of the Mesará-type tholos tomb. Minoan influence, however 'influence' should be conceptualised, was however present in Messinía at this time, and so the general concept of a round building containing numerous burials may have been known and may have formed some small part of the impetus for the secondary adaptation of the tholos tomb.

The few chamber tomb sites included in the study area do not form a unitary phenomenon. The chamber tombs on *62:Kíthira* form part of a tradition of burial practice primarily evidenced in the Knosós valley on Crete, while the *23:Volimídhia* tombs, while perhaps built with some knowledge of Knossian or Kithiran chamber tombs, are most easily understood simply as *differently constructed tholos tombs*. The *58:Epídhavros Limirá* cemetery is the least easy to understand, located far from the centre of emerging tholos-type burial traditions. Its genesis may be more generally related to north-south lines of communication between Crete, Kíthira, eastern Lakonía and the Argolid, although this observation does not explain its appearance. Three new chamber tomb sites in LHII account for only one tomb each.

Tholos tomb construction was the work of specialists or specialist groups, active within the central Messenian area and occasionally elsewhere. In LHIIA, while construction of smaller tholoi continued as before, a group of architects, conceivably working as a unit, was responsible for the construction of the largest tombs. Chamber tomb construction was a locally-maintained knowledge, and equally specialist in its own way (which was *not* the case in LHIII): the cemetery at Pellána may have been constructed under the supervision of a Messenian architect.

Concomitant with the secondary adaptation of the tholos tomb was considerable elaboration in adornment of the corpse, so that by the end of LHI and into LHIIA certain burials involved huge amounts of material culture. This adornment involved a formulaic 'set' comprising decoration for the shroud made of gold foil, jewellery in the form of bead necklaces, and weaponry, usually knives, worn by the corpse. Display was enhanced by laying the corpse in a supine position.

The preparation of the corpse in this manner also suggests that one arena for display would be the procession: the architecture of tholos and chamber tombs allows for an approach to a monument with a specific focus (along the dromos to the entrance), while entry into the monument would involve selection among the participants and an order of walking. Funerary rites usually involved relatively few people in the chamber at any given moment, except perhaps for the largest tombs. Inhumation was directly on the floor, or occasionally in pits, cists or pithoi. Material culture remains found with corpses suggest a continued emphasis on drinking or pouring ceremonies that took place immediately after the deposition of the corpse.

Tholos and chamber tomb architecture was designed to be reused: tombs usually show evidence for numerous funerals. After the dissolution of the flesh it became normal to disarticulate the bones, and often deposit them in a niche or pit. The tholos and chamber tomb form was

therefore communal (in the sense that a specific group was likely seen to be associated with it) and the disarticulation of the bones signified the incorporation of the dead among the ancestors.

The creation, maintenance and transformation of tradition

The analyses presented so far in this thesis have sought to distinguish individual action in the mass of archaeological evidence - moments in time instantiated in material remains. Having thus transformed the evidence from pottery, bones and tombs into postulated and reconstructed *praxis*, the evidence must be transformed once more into historical narrative.

What brings about the reproduction of practice through time? In reproducing practice, the locale, the human understanding of place, is itself reproduced: locale has a chronic aspect, a situation in time as well as space. The repeated instances of practice noted in this thesis are bound up with the arenas in which they were performed.

It follows that locale is essential not only to the maintenance of tradition, but also to its coming into being, and its transformation. It was noted in chapter three that it is impossible to come to an understanding of action without also understanding the setting of that action - where and how it *takes place*. The historical narrative, therefore, must be an account of situated action, the locale providing temporal and spatial fixity for action, and thus providing for the possibility of the institutionalisation of practice - the creation and maintenance of tradition.

Continuity

There are two main themes in the history of burial practices and places in the space and time of this study: on the one hand the creation and transformation of a monumental burial tradition, and on the other a continuity of tradition. The latter is perhaps less obvious, and so will be considered first. Long term continuity is evident in certain aspects of funerary customs. First is a concern with the incorporation of the dead among the ancestors. By 'incorporation' here I intend to signify not simply the physical transformation of death and the placing of the dead among the ancestors, but more precisely a tradition, maintained throughout the time and space of this study, that on death the individual leaves the community and joins the numberless mass of the ancestors. This is evidenced on two counts: first, not only is there little evidence that burial architecture was designed to presence the *individual* dead among the living, but further, study of burial architecture and locale (including 'simpler' graves) has shown that the dead were

consistently placed among the ancestors and came to be seen as an anonymous part of that group. All of the monumental burial traditions - tumuli, tholoi and chamber tombs - presence the dead as a group in the landscape without any precedence for the individual; moreover, it has been shown that whenever the living came into direct contact with the dead, whether by accident or by design, the consistent reaction was to de-emphasise the individual (through disarticulation of bones and disassembly of the pristine burial context) and to incorporate the individual anonymously among the ancestors (by mixing of contexts). As for 'simpler' burials, much of the evidence shows the dead buried in settled areas fallen out of use (in ancestral settlement), usually (although not always) with no care taken to make the grave visible for any length of time. Encounters with earlier dead in these contexts seem to have followed a similar pattern as with monumental burials - disarticulation of the bones and, through unmarked reburial, the incorporation of the bones with the ancestors.

Yet the analysis must be more complex than this. What of those instances where individual graves *are* marked out in the cemetery? And what of the immense investment in display - heaped on the *individual* dead, not the mass of ancestors - evidenced in some burial ceremonies? In this we identify a tension between tradition and the individual moment of action. Whereas the evidence sustains the view that the dominant ideology surrounding death would depersonify the ancestors, yet at the moment of the funeral, the reality of death newly present and the dead only newly absent, the core tension lies between the unavoidable necessity of letting the dead take their leave, and a desire that they not go. Elaborate activities on the fading corporeal vestige of the dead, or small acts at the graveside to manifest the dead *in memoriam*, signify attempts to maintain the presence of the dead in the community. In eventually creating the tholos and chamber tomb form, an architecture was brought into being that allowed for the living to take care of the incorporation of the dead among the ancestors over a much longer period of mourning: the immediate need not to let go of the dead could be catered for by allowing their deposition on the floor of the tomb, their fading presence emphasised by all the finery that those taking care for the funeral could muster; much later, grief having subsided and families, groups and the community having realigned to account for the dead's absence, the mourners could return to the tomb to carry out those acts on the dead that physically and symbolically, finally, placed them among the ancestors. This transformation of existing tradition paralleled and partly motivated the architectural transformation in the secondary adaptation of the tholos tomb.

Other threads of continuity concern the treatment of the dead, and modes of interment. In the former there is no radical change throughout this long period: preparation of the dead for

burial, whether elaborate or simple, was a tradition that could be mobilised by mourners in short term opposition to the imminent loss of the dead to the ancestors. All the evidence, as far as it goes, indicates that the dead went through unchanged forms of treatment before burial for the entire period of this study. The highly elaborate dressings of the dead in the LHI-IIA period can simply be viewed as 'more so' - the same tradition enacted with recourse to a material resource stockpile unavailable at other times. This observation is important because it shows that the understanding of how to go about dealing with death, at the most basic level, remained unchanged throughout the period: first the mourners engaged directly with the corpse, and then the funeral was carried out. It is likely that the procession to the grave, carrying the dead physically and symbolically away from the living community to the burial site, took place between these two phases. On only a few occasions late in the period, it appears possible that the corpse went through a secondary phase of embellishment after deposition, with mourners filing past the grave within the tomb, some of them adding to the array of objects already present.

Modes of interment similarly remained unchanged throughout the period. At the most basic level the dead was interred in a hole in the ground. The corpse was laid on its back or on its side in a grave dug or built to the scale of the human frame. Burials in mounds took place in pithoi, as well as in pits or cists; although monumental pithoi did alter the circumstances of interment, they retained the feature of being a burial space scaled to the human body. In tholos and chamber tombs, the dominant mode of deposition was simply on the floor, but there were nonetheless numerous instances of inhumation in pits or, less regularly, cists or pithoi; and the secondary activities on the dead in these tombs regularly ended with the deposition of bones and other material in pits or (in the case of chamber tombs) niches. Although the tradition of burial on the floor in tholos and chamber tombs would appear to be slightly different from what went before, it originated in the placement of the corpse on the floor of smaller tholos tombs (and perhaps ultimately in the placement of the corpse within pithoi), and in any case it remained an inhumation in the sense that tholos tombs were always underground (under mound) places.

Simple rituals at the moment of inhumation also seem to have been maintained throughout the period. There may have been numerous complicated rituals that left no material trace, and these may have changed much in time; but on basis of the evidence that remains, where any activity is recorded, that activity is very often related to drinking and pouring activity. In the later period the same actions were extended to the moment of opening or closing the tomb. At certain times or places, the material culture associated with these actions became highly

formalised (the kantharoi of the MH burial mounds, the Vafió cups in some LHI-IIA tholoi, and the ubiquitous kylikes of the LHII-III period), representing the formalised nature of the actions within burial customs.

Change

Having sketched this background of continuity, it is now possible to consider the creation, maintenance and transformation of the more obvious traditions that form the history of burial practices in this time and space. The principal act of creation in this period was the creation of the monumental multiple burial mound. This was motivated by the desire to take a communal resource (the ancestors), already an established part of tradition, and situate it visibly and solidly in the encultured landscape: this motivation remained constant through changes in monument form or landscape location. Every aspect of design and deposition in all of these monuments suggests that this was an underlying structuring principle.

The middle helladic mounds at their most basic simply took the idea of the cemetery, dissociated it from current settlement (but in at least some cases explicitly associated it with ancestral settlement sites), and raised it up in monumental form. Pithos burials represented a specific elaboration of tradition, on the one hand in the 'value' of the pithos itself, and the transformation of a domestic object into a part of the funerary assemblage, and on the other in that its defined point of entry (its mouth) allowed for interference with burials and for new burials in the same space. The prevalence of this tradition is by no means clear (due to the number of unexcavated mounds), but the practice appears to have quickly become widespread, concomitant with the tumulus form itself. The idea of a burial space with a defined point of entry, as realised by the pithoi, was redefined in the construction of small tholos tombs in multiple burial mounds, and then redefined again in the secondary adaptation of the tholos tomb, when the tomb became the sole burial space of the mound, now conceptually subordinate to it. In all of these transformations of architecture the underlying tradition concerns the ancestral burial mound and its presence in the landscape: changes in architecture and burial practices represent the maintenance and transformation of that tradition through time.

The creation of the tholos form had the furthest-reaching consequences of any of these transformations, but it is argued in this thesis that the proliferation of the tholos was an *unintended consequence* of architectural experimentation. Whatever the inspiration for the rounded form of the tholos (most likely an attempt to build a stone pithos), its first architects

were attempting to create new kinds of burial spaces within multiple burial monuments: they were working within the existing tradition, they did not set out explicitly to completely transform mortuary architecture. The perfection of the technique made possible the construction of larger tombs, in turn bringing about a transformation in tradition. These acts of construction created a monument with a single burial space, but one exploited for a large number of burials, thus retaining continuity of tradition in ancestral monuments. These acts of construction were brought about by and made inevitable changes in funerary ritual: changes welcomed by those using the tombs, as is shown by their rapid and widespread acceptance. There is a symbiosis of architecture and ritual: change in one is structurally interwoven with change in the other.

What were those changes? As outlined in chapter eight, tholos and chamber tomb architecture is specifically enabling and constraining on the human form, entailing an architectural space within which a restricted number of people can act on or over the corpse in ritual hidden from those outside; the same properties allow for non-funerary actions involving engagement with ancestral remains in a this hidden, restricted space. The architecture moreover allows for an ordered movement in and out of the tomb, and possibly for hierarchisation in position, inasmuch as some might be in the chamber, others in the stomion, and still others in the dromos or completely outside the monument.

A description of what changes took place does not, however, *explain why* they occurred. The secondary adaptation of the tholos tomb form and its proliferation came about because the properties of the tomb were found to be apposite by those involved in tomb construction. In the case of a 2m to 3m diameter tholos tomb in a multiple burial mound, very few of the mourners might enter at any one time, and so although the structure was radical in allowing one to enter, the restricted size meant that only a very small group might perform the rites of deposition. The construction of 5m to 7m diameter tholos tombs allowed for larger groups to be involved in the ceremony, and perhaps for the further development of hierarchies among the mourners. This hints at differences in how control over access to tholos and chamber tombs might be exercised: fewer, larger tombs serving a wider community, rather than numerous smaller tombs with multiple claims of control. This seems to be the way tholos tomb use had developed in some areas by the end of LHIIA.

Tradition and social differentiation

These thoughts bring us to the question of the place of monumental tombs in manipulating and maintaining social differentiation. It has been argued in this thesis that the architecture of any given monument has no direct bearing on whether any or all of the dead within can be regarded as either 'rich' or of elevated social status. A more satisfying question concerns the rôles such monuments or individual funerals may have been made to play in social strategies: in other words, not whether monuments and burials reflect social stratification, but how the opportunities and resources of the funeral, the monument or the ancestors may have been used in the creation, maintenance or transformation of social differentiation.

On one side of the argument, it might be observed that MH multiple burial mounds are communal in every sense and there is no need or reason to suppose that they represent a select group of the socially advantaged; on the other, observations such as the ability to harness labour, as well as the considerable 'riches' deposited with some of the dead, might lead to the suggestion that the dead of tholos tombs represent the élite of society. Neither suggestion represents a satisfying analysis of the evidence. The crucial observation is that the structures of the social world that are created, reproduced and transformed in funerary ceremonies, or that are writ large in public monuments, need not relate in a simple way to the dead: in other words, that social structure need not be so personified in individuals that their treatment in death mirrors the power they wielded in life (chapter two). Social structures are created and manipulated by the living in action: so in recognising instances of action in the mortuary sphere, one ought to be able to approach something of the structures instantiated by the living in those actions.

It follows that MH burial mounds, along with all of the burial structures discussed in this thesis, certainly *were* bound up in the reproduction of the social order; the important question surrounds not who was being buried in these mounds, but rather who (what groups) acted in such a way as to allow or cause a mound to be created or a funeral to take place. Moreover, in a world where domestic architecture seems to have been ephemeral and settlement dispersed, pottery and burial customs are the only phenomena suggesting any notion of widespread social cohesion, however slight.

In order to analyse the reproduction of social order, we must develop an adequate theory of *power*. Shanks & Tilley (1987, 73) point out that 'power is that aspect of human practices which *brings about effects*' and that it is a 'positive and not just a repressive feature of the

social'. Power is not therefore an abstract resource, it rather describes the ability of the agent to act, or to influence the action of others: it is *power to*. Resources and access to them are a component of the power to act, and tradition forms a resource empowering the actions most deeply involved in the reproduction of social order:

> ... of essential importance to the engendering of power is the storage of authoritative resources ... In oral cultures human memory is virtually the sole repository of information storage. However ... memory (or recall) is to be understood not only in relation to the psychological qualities of individual agents but also as inhering in the recursiveness of institutional reproduction ... storage presumes *media* of information representation, modes of information *retrieval* or recall and, as with all power resources, modes of its dissemination.
>
> Giddens 1984, 261: emphases in original.

In the present discussion the media of information representation are the tomb and the material culture of burial practice; the modes of information retrieval are the enactment of ritual following tradition; and the modes of its dissemination are memory, talk and the physical presence of monuments in the landscape.

The rôle of monumental burial in the articulation of social power is basically dual: within groups or communities, and between groups or communities. One can discern vertical lines of power (within groups or communities) brought into play at each funeral or mortuary act, and horizontal lines of power (between groups or communities) in the articulation of widespread social structures through burial monuments. Yet such a superficial analysis 'does not confront the full diversity of our data' (Barrett 1988b, 32). *How* could power seem to be invested in monumental burial practices, and what of the complexity of the data - the uneven distribution of these resources through space and time?

To begin with the individual moment of the funeral, potentially conflicting resources can be identified. Beyond memory and knowledge, these resources are the material embodiment of tradition - the monumental burial structure, and a resource demanding fairly immediate mobilisation - the corpse. That which is to be accomplished is the incorporation of one within the other; the power to act therefore depends on the power both to act upon the corpse and the power act at the burial place. Tradition, memory and knowledge are available to be called upon in structuring the funeral, and the material reality of both tomb and corpse further structure action. So the question of the reproduction of social order concerns the ability both of the mourners to gain access to the tomb in order to achieve interment, but also the ability of those controlling access to the tomb to bring it about that interment is carried out in the tomb. Although this moment is being presented here as a potential source of conflict, *it need not be so,*

and in fact the widespread reproduction of practice, and its longevity, points to the stability of the tradition, and therefore to the existence of established mechanisms whereby interest groups' needs are consistently satisfied in the mortuary sphere. In other words, the transient power to mobilise the corpse as a resource was consistently and satisfactorily subordinated to a power over the mortuary locale manifested in the reproduction of tradition.

Power over the mortuary locale need neither have seemed to be controversial nor in some way separated from the arrangement for the funeral. It seems likely that those able to gain access to that locale would have been closely involved in all aspects of the funeral. The unequal opposition set up here between mobilisation of the corpse and tradition in the mortuary sphere merely shows how the latter was consistently confirmed by the former. Nevertheless, the ability for people to act otherwise - for things to have been different - is allowed for in this analysis. During the funeral, control over the corpse is subordinated to access to the mortuary locale, but the mourners *could have acted otherwise*, and used their power to subvert that represented by the mortuary locale, by disposing of the corpse elsewhere. Moreover, the importance of control over the mortuary locale is shown by the fact that some burials did not take place there (given that the number of burial mounds, chamber tombs or tholos tombs, even allowing for attrition through time, cannot represent the burial places of the whole population, especially clear in regions such as Lakonía): power over access to the mortuary locale at least sometimes included a degree of discretion, and for those taking care of the funeral, there may have been a choice of viable burial locales. Furthermore, the past reality was one of multiple funerary locales in many areas: the dialectic between the individual burial and the maintenance of tradition was therefore diffuse, not a single, simple power relation.

These two power bases, control over the mortuary locale and control over the corpse, and their interface in the moment of interment, were employed in the reproduction of tradition over the very long period this study. However, the scope of the social order implied in this analysis need not have extended beyond the funerary sphere itself and, moreover, the nature of that social order, even though employing these same power bases, will have changed over time. What, if any, are the wider social ramifications - how is the social order reproduced in burial practices related to the reproduction of relations of power in the wider community?

In chapter three it was noted that the reproduction of social structures is primarily a function of the routine ('everyday repetition ... creates social structure', page 57). Prevailing power relations in society are also therefore reproduced in the routine. In the face of the everyday, ongoing nature of social life, with its embedded power relations, social order and differentiation,

it would be ludicrous to suggest that an artefact as non-routine as a burial monument was *fundamental* to the ongoing reproduction of society. The question therefore concerns the rôles that burial monuments might be made to play in those power relations.

What is the link between power relations embedded in the routine, and power relations made manifest in traditional action in the mortuary sphere? One approach to this question, beyond the scope of this thesis, is to consider the *nature* of routine practice as evidenced in house, settlement, farmstead and workshop. An alternative approach is to consider the nature of *horizontal* relations of power evident in the monuments, the relationships between action and tradition at different times and places.

This approach is related to the question posed above: what is the explanation for the uneven distribution of burial monuments through space and time? There are two closely related elements that must be worked into an answer: first, that the widespread distribution of such monuments indicates that the traditions worked through them, and in particular the power bases noted above, could be found applicable, apposite or useful in (widely) separated groups; and second that the specific local social conditions, in which these monuments were situated, differed, as is shown by specific, local variations in location, architecture and mortuary practice. Having elucidated what local variation might mean, the relationship between the distribution of the monuments and the reproduction of widely spaced social structures will become clearer.

The creation and use of a burial mound has been linked with a specific ideology - that of locating the mass of the ancestors visibly in the inhabited landscape. This ideology was comprehensible to communities throughout the area where tumuli are found, but the opportunity to build mounds was unevenly taken up. In central Messinía a great number of such mounds were constructed, but elsewhere (southern Messinía, northern Messinía, southern Ilía), only a few isolated examples are known, and large regions have none (unlikely to be a result of sample bias: chapter one). In central Messinía, certain specific explanations for the large number of neighbouring mounds may be offered: that individual mounds relate to small groups rather than large communities; that mounds may be located close to each other in a pattern unrelated to settlement distribution because location was primarily a function of understandings of landscape paths and locales whose cultural importance existed before the construction of a mound; that the construction of mounds in marginal areas presenced the ancestors, as representing groups or communities, in the landscape as moved through. All of these explanations may be apposite, with more or less importance, in explaining how what we perceive as the central Messenian distribution of burial mounds came into being; the important

point for the current discussion, however, is that such explanations will not suffice in regard to instances of tumuli such as that at *35:Peristeriá*, or the group at *43:Káto Samikó Klidhí*. The groups using these tombs were involved in building and using relatively isolated monuments; no part of the reproduction of tradition was bound up with similar nearby traditions. These monuments and the traditions associated with them must have been differently bound up in local social structures, in comparison with examples in central Messinía: either as very marginal to the social order, or much more central to it. In either case, although we cannot determine the importance of the monument in reproduction of the social order, we can determine that its place was different in different areas: therefore the monument cannot be made to represent the pan-helladic reproduction of a uniform social structure.

Similar conditions pertain even within the central Messenian area. Differences in architecture, differences in specific burial traditions, locations of proximity to or distance from other mounds or landscape features, and not least differing periods of use, show that the position of 'the burial mound' in society was highly variable through time and space and between different communities, groups and organisations. The specific nature of power relations manifested in individual mounds are therefore related to society at large in a complex way: social structure cannot be directly 'read off' from these artefacts.

Nonetheless, all of these mounds *were* rooted in a common ideology and exhibit fundamental similarities in tradition, on top of which rest more superficial differences. These differences result from the way that those building and using mounds sought to situate their practice within a complex nexus of tradition and other, more temporal concerns. This is the crux of the matter: burial mounds do not *reflect* widespread social structures, but they *were* built in a complex haze of ever receding resonances partly constituted of the relationship between similar institutions. The extent to which this nexus extended beyond groupings involved with burial mounds to routine power relations is unknowable, but small differences in location, architecture and mortuary practice suggest that these traditions were mobilised in local social structures in slightly differing ways, for the reason that there were significant differences (as well as similarities) in those local social structures.

In asking the same question of tholos and chamber tombs ('What is the link between power relations embedded in the routine and power relations made manifest in traditional action in the mortuary sphere?'), the same answer must be given: tholos and chamber tombs could be built in different areas because they drew on common traditional resources, thus positioning them in a broad nexus of power relations, but they were differently situated in local social structures, as is

shown by differences in location and locale, architecture and mortuary practices. The tumulus, tholos, or chamber tomb do not represent unitary phenomena: they do not stand as metaphor for an entire culture. Any tomb was built within local and specific circumstances, and its use was equally local and specific. Much as this study has sought to define clearly what shared ideologies and traditions were mobilised and maintained at these tombs, the conclusion must be that tombs and traditions carry no meaning of themselves: meaning is to be found in how people understood and used these resources within their communities.

Funerary customs and the inception of 'Mycenaean civilisation'

One other widely shared material element of society through the whole period of study, as alluded to above, is pottery. The appearance of tholos tombs and chamber tombs is traditionally associated with the appearance of a new kind of pottery throughout the helladic world, and these two phenomena together have been taken as the principal indicators of the inception of 'Mycenaean civilisation' (chapter two). This section briefly considers what meaning can be drawn from these phenomena in the light of the conclusions noted above.

It was noted in chapter one that the appearance of Mycenaean pottery is by no means a unitary phenomenon: not only does it typically make up a small percentage of LHI assemblages dominated by continuing MH styles, but moreover its adoption occurs at different rates and at different moments at different sites. An understanding of the adoption of Mycenaean pottery styles would entail at one level a study of their introduction into the routines of life at individual sites - in other words, what rôle this material was made to play in the everyday reproduction of social structure; and at another level a study of differential adoption and use of these styles at different sites and in different areas within sites. Without presupposing a study yet to be conducted, the parameters outlined here would allow for the understanding of an apparently widespread phenomenon as the strategic employment of widely comprehensible symbols within local power structures.

That the introduction and development of Mycenaean pottery is not a unitary phenomenon parallels the conclusion of this thesis that mortuary practice is by no means a unitary phenomenon; the suggestion that pottery, representing widely comprehensible symbols, might become widespread through multiple local strategies of use parallels the verdict of this thesis that the spread of tholos and chamber tombs was the result of their incorporation in numerous local power structures. This observation that can certainly be extended to the wider helladic

world, and probably into the LHIII period (below). This has considerable implications for the ethnic and culture-historical characterisation of society in LHI-II. It was shown in chapter two that many previous studies of 'status' as 'reflected' in mortuary evidence held that such status could be identified with rôles in social hierarchies found wherever Mycenaean mortuary customs could be identified - in other words, that burial practices carried out in tholos and chamber tombs used those monuments in a recurrent manner to create and recreate comparable power structures throughout the Mycenaean cultural area. This study has shown that the power relations inherent in practices at tholos and chamber tombs did not relate in a uniform and non-complex way with the routine reproduction of social structures, and moreover that the relationship between traditional action in the mortuary arena and the reproduction of social structure was entirely contingent on local and temporal social strategies. According to this interpretation, a homogeneous picture of Mycenaean culture in LHI-II Greece cannot be sustained by reference to burial practices, or pottery.

The explanation of wide spread phenomena is one of the most interesting questions in archaeology. Recourse to culture or ethnicity provides little that is actively *explanatory*: I contend that the current review has provided explanations for continuity, change and the active incorporation of tradition in differing local circumstances without employing ethnicity as explanation. In assessing another (much more) widespread phenomenon, Barrett came to similar conclusions:

> It was not an adherence to ethnic identity which defined the subject but their submission to forms of authority, such as the lineage, and these forms of authority created their own histories which could be reinvented to incorporate the fluctuating demands of political affiliation. These were the oral histories recounted in the rituals and legends of a region and which employed the monuments themselves as their immediate points of reference.
>
> Barrett 1994b, 107.

Future research: extending the scope chronologically and spatially

The helladic world in the MHI-LHIIB period

The analyses presented in this thesis have rarely appealed to the wider helladic world, in a conscious attempt to interpret the evidence in a localised fashion and avoid explanations involving the 'Mycenaean world'. Nonetheless, there clearly exist a number of parallel traditions that are implicated in those observed within the study area. There is an enormous database of

simpler burials (Lewartowski 1995), there are middle helladic burial mounds in the Argolid, Attikí, possibly Korinthía, and one example each in *Steréa Elládha* and on Evia (Cavanagh & Mee 1998, 38-39); and numerous tholos and chamber tombs (Cavanagh & Mee 1998, 58-60). The temptation to assess the significance of these monuments within the terms of debate set here is overwhelming: particularly significant are the parallel adoptions of burial mounds in the MH period in various areas, perhaps confirming the hypothesis that, however understood within local structures, an underlying understanding of the dead in ancestral terms was a motivating factor in their construction wherever they are found; in the 'shaft-grave period', however, elaboration of the mortuary arena, primarily architectural in the southwestern Peloponnese, was articulated through ostentatious display at Mycenae, and tholoi and chamber tombs only later adopted in those areas.

Interesting as these theories are, however, the contention of this thesis is that understandings on a regional scale can only be achieved after close study of individual sites, as has been done here for Messinía, Ilía and Lakonía; such a close study would inevitably produce new insights beyond those noted above, which appear obvious from the data as currently understood.

The LHIII period within the study area

LHIII burial sites within the study area are listed and partly described in appendix two. Relatively few new tholos tombs appear to have been constructed in LHIII, and many of those listed in appendix two are poorly understood, making it possible that evidence for earlier construction dates is lost or not yet found. Of tholos tombs built in this period, none falls into the category of large and well built tombs, unless the tomb at Epia Anthía should date to LHIII. There is little change in the observed distribution of tholos tombs. Superficial analysis of the evidence suggests that mortuary customs were scarcely changed at these tombs, although fewer burials seem to have involved intensive appropriation of material resources.

The situation is completely different with chamber tombs. New cemeteries are located throughout the study area, particularly in Ilía in those areas where LHI-II burial structures were hardly evidenced, and also in Lakonía; in Messinía, on the other hand, a number of new chamber tombs was built, but few large cemeteries, and the region remained curiously reticent about this ubiquitous LHIII architectural form. It is certainly significant that larger chamber tomb cemeteries in Messinía are to be found in the east of the province (again, Epia Anthía, along with Kalamáta: appendix two), an area scarcely involved in the reproduction of burial tradition in earlier periods.

Obvious research questions would be: how were tholos and chamber tombs used in LHIII? What factors brought about the wider distribution of chamber tombs? Why are larger cemeteries found in some areas, individual tombs elsewhere? What relationships can be detected between mortuary customs and wider society? Specifically, is there any observable relationship between palace or other sites and funerary sites? Again, only close study of the individual sites would lead to the level of understanding necessary to tackle these questions.

The LHIII period elsewhere

Two concerns are immediately clear: first, differential patterns in the adoption, use and discontinuation of various burial customs within the Helladic area, and second the construction and use of Mycenaean burial forms outside the Helladic area. The frame within which these concerns has been set is again an ethnic one: close study of individual sites and regions in the manner suggested by this thesis would free the debate of such ethnic concerns and allow for deeper, region-based understandings of the archaeology of the period.

A CONCLUSION

The mortuary arena is a very special challenge to archaeology, as it was to those who created it and acted within it in the past. Death is the least comprehensible part of life; those who are affected by death close by find their circumstances radically altered, often in the most distressing way. How do people come to terms with such a challenge? The unique degree of preservation of mortuary contexts above all other contexts in archaeology offers us an opportunity to observe individual, identifiable acts from the past. We should approach the mortuary arena with the greatest humility and respect for the efforts of those that went before us to come to terms with death. This applies not only to the conduct of excavation, but especially to interpretation. The excavation and publication of tombs must be primarily aimed at understanding *what people did* in the past. If any other interpretative goal is made primary, we do not treat with respect the remains of those individual lives that we are allegedly trying to understand.